OLD!

# The ULTIMATE 80s Collection

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## The ULTIMATE 80s Collection

**Arguably the best decade of the 20th century, the ’80s had it all – unforgettable music, iconic movies, timeless TV shows, incredible fashion, and some of the greatest toys and games ever created. Packed full of passionate tributes and stunning photography, the Ultimate 80s Collection is a celebration of the decade that brought us Pac-Man, Back to the Future, the Rubik’s Cube, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, acid house music, neon and so much more. Join us as we take a trip down memory lane and revisit the films, albums, videogames, toys, TV shows and clothes that made the ’80s so special.**

SONY
STEREO
C60

FUTURE

# The ULTIMATE 80s Collection

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Printed in the UK

**Distributed by** Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk – For enquiries, please email:
mfcommunications@futurenet.com

**The Ultimate 80s Collection Fifth Edition (LBZ5454)**

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London Stock Exchange
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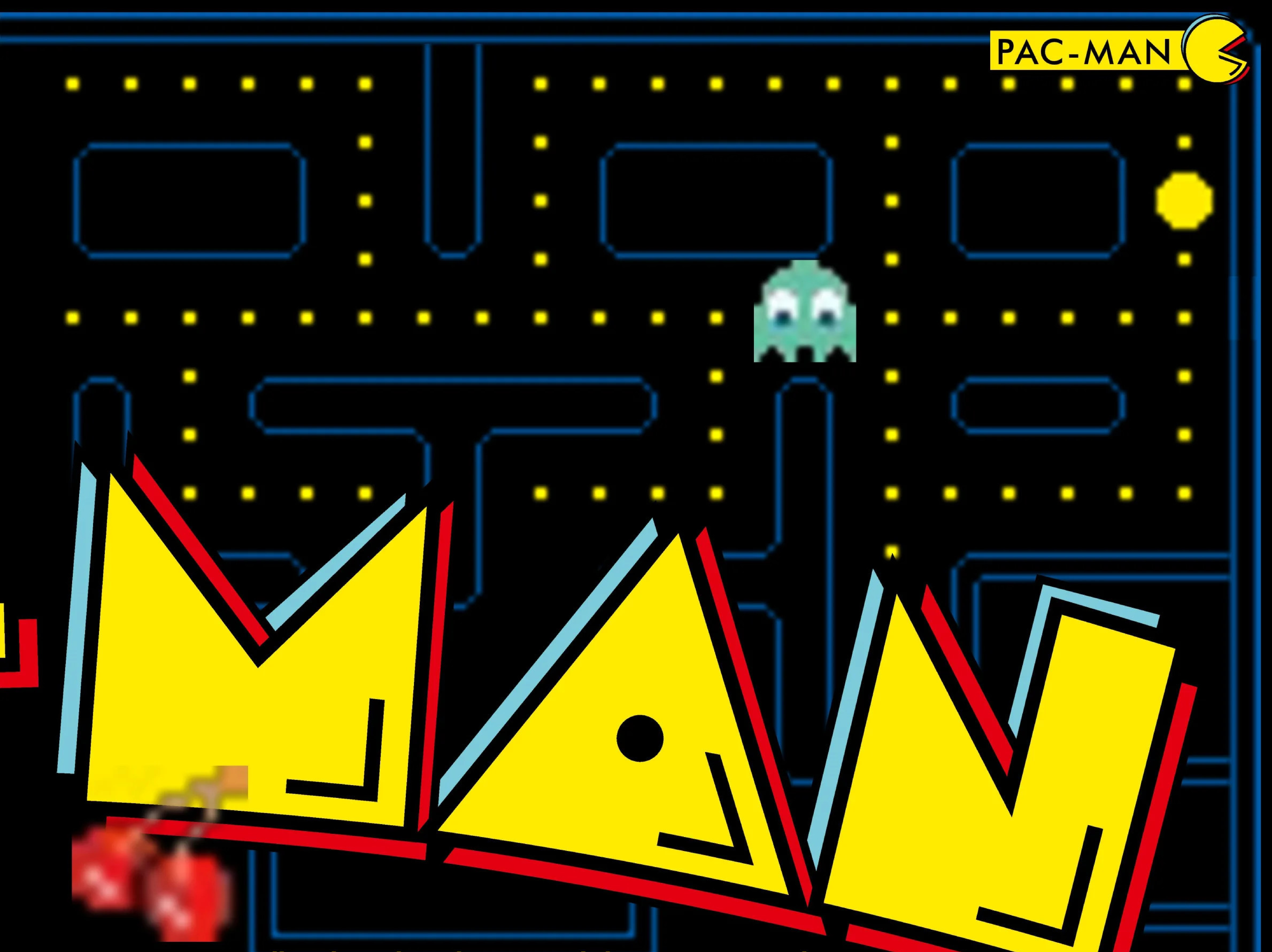


**Toru Iwatani talks about how he created the most iconic character in videogames history, devised one of the most enduring and copied game formats, and revisited his creation for Xbox 360**

With modern-day game characters often being designed and scripted to ape Hollywood movie stars, it's pleasing that a yellow circle with an insatiable appetite remains the most enduring videogaming star to date. After all, which gamer hasn't played a variant of *Pac-Man*? According to a May 2008 report by the Davie Brown Celebrity Index (**dbireport.com**), which scores celebrities to evaluate potential product spokespeople, *Pac-Man* was recognised by 94 per cent of US consumers, outstripping *Mario*. *Pac-Man*'s appeal is, ironically, akin to Hollywood heavyweights like Tom Hanks.

Part of this appeal is no doubt down to the fun, peaceful nature of Pac-Man and his actions. He explores a simple maze, munching dots, pursued by a quartet of cartoon ghosts. When Pac-Man eats one of the maze's four power pellets, the ghosts turn blue and flee, having suddenly become edible and decidedly non-threatening. However, even when a ghost is consumed, its eyes 'escape', hastily retreating to the central ghost pen, whereupon it's reborn.

Toru Iwatani with an altogether cuddlier version of Blinky/Akabei, along with similarly soft versions of Pac-Man.

This gentle, good-natured gameplay was no accident, as the game's designer Toru Iwatani explains. "In the late '70s, videogame arcades, which in Japan we call 'game centres', were just playgrounds for boys, and the only videogames on offer were brutal affairs involving the killing of aliens," he remembers. "My aim was to come up with a game that had an endearing charm, was easy to play, involved lots of light-hearted fun, and that women and couples could enjoy."

Iwatani started thinking about videogame ideas in which the key word was the verb 'eat'. And, yes, the pizza rumour is largely true – while at lunch, a fast-food favourite changed the course of gaming history. "With 'eat' established as the key word, a shape caught my eye," recalls Iwatani. "I had ordered a round pizza, and it was missing a piece." In a 'eureka' moment, "the shape of what is now Pac-Man flashed through my mind."

Even in those early gaming days, videogame characters had a little detail, but

## IN THE KNOW

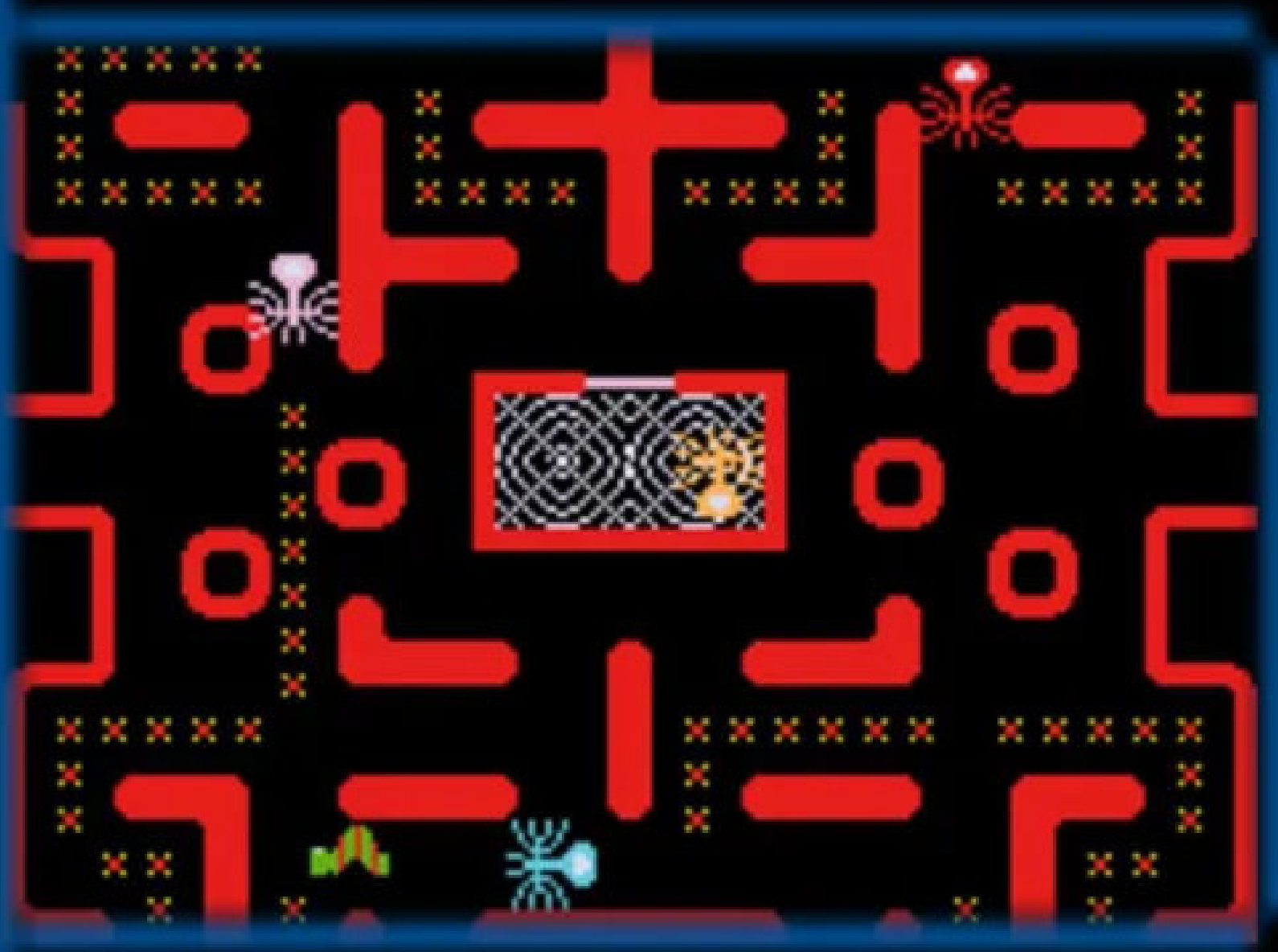
A labyrinth of fun & amusement!
PAC-MAN
MIDWAY'S AMAZE-ING NEW 1 or 2 PLAYER FULL COLOR VIDEO GAME!
MIDWAY

- **PUBLISHER:** NAMCO/MIDWAY
- **DEVELOPER:** NAMCO
- **RELEASED:** 1980
- **PLATFORMS:** ARCADE, VARIOUS
- **GENRE:** MAZE GAME

## Hack-Man

With its efficient, simple gameplay and aesthetics, *Pac-Man* was popular fodder for the hacking brigade. Basic hacks involved minor gameplay tweaks, such as speeding things up, while slightly less basic hacks messed about with the maze, graphics and sound, adding to the original game's pristine polish a veneer of sticky and semi-random digital jam. The hideous *Joyman*, with its ghastly audio and broken maze layout, most notably kicked *Pac-Man* in the head with all the subtlety of a size-ten boot.

The most effective hacks are those that respect the original formula – *Hangly-Man*'s amended mazes – but GL's *Piranha* is an exception. Removing the maze and shifting the setting to a claustrophobic underwater cavern – the eponymous piranha pursued by ravenous octopuses – gives the game an edge in terms of focus and originality that other hacks typically lack.



Pac-Man was forever destined in his first incarnation to remain a yellow disc with a basic mouth, like an incredibly simplified version of Iwatani's lunch. He notes that some suggested at the time that other components should be added, such as eyes, but then there would be no end to the additions. "As design concepts, both Pac-Man and the ghosts have a simplicity and endearing charm," Iwatani says of his decision to keep the graphic design streamlined, also suggesting that the visuals of the game helped it appeal to female gamers of the day.

The elegant clarity of the character design also influenced the game itself. The food for Pac-Man to eat was initially strewn all over the screen, but Iwatani was keen to ensure gamers would immediately know what to do. "I wanted to simplify gameplay operation, and so the idea occurred to me of constructing a maze in which movement was restricted to the four basic directions – up and down, left and right," he says. With this structure in place, the game's objective became more obvious, and the lead character soon gained his moniker, 'Pakku Man', based on Japanese slang 'paku-paku', which describes the sound of the mouth while eating. (The original game's title subsequently became *Puck Man*. The US publisher, Midway, renamed it *Pac-Man* to stop wily hoodlums amending the 'p' in 'puck' to an 'f'.)

With the game's basic content dealt with, Iwatani realised it wasn't yet much fun, and so enemies were added to the mix, providing tension and excitement, and making it a challenge for players to grab food from the maze. Unusually for the time, Iwatani not only developed rudimentary artificial intelligence for the ghosts, but ensured each one had its own personality of sorts, due to moving and attacking Pac-Man in its own way. "The adversarial TV cartoon *Tom and Jerry* helped shape the relationship between Pac-Man and the ghosts," recalls Iwatani. "Had the programming been such that the four ghosts constantly attacked Pac-Man's present location according to the same algorithm, the ghosts would look like a string of beads. Where's the thrill in that? So I introduced AI-type algorithms that had the ghosts coming at Pac-Man from all directions."

And so we were introduced to Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde (Akabei, Pinky, Aosuke and Guzuta in the original Japanese release). According to Iwatani, the ghosts attack in waves, before dispersing and attacking again, which gives the player some regular breathing space and appears more organic than the kind of incessant attacks that had plagued earlier arcade games like *Space Invaders*. (Over time, these waves are harder to identify, and the ghost attacks become swift and relentless, somewhat contradicting Iwatani's desire for a non-stressful game, but providing a necessary long-term challenge for seasoned players.) Although gamers often disagree with exactly how the algorithms work in practice, Iwatani has in the past stated that Blinky is designed to chase Pac-Man, but that Pinky's goal is to aim just in front of Pac-Man, hence why the two often seem to 'sandwich' the hero. The movement of Inky and Clyde is a lot more random, the end result being that Pac-Man is pursued in a

> ***"I designed the game so players of any age and either sex could play it straight away, without reading a game manual"***
>
> TORU IWATANI

▼ When *Pac-Man* won awards, it didn't mess about: these are for the 'most successful coin-operated game in history' and 'game of the century'.

THE GAME OF THE CENTURY AWARD

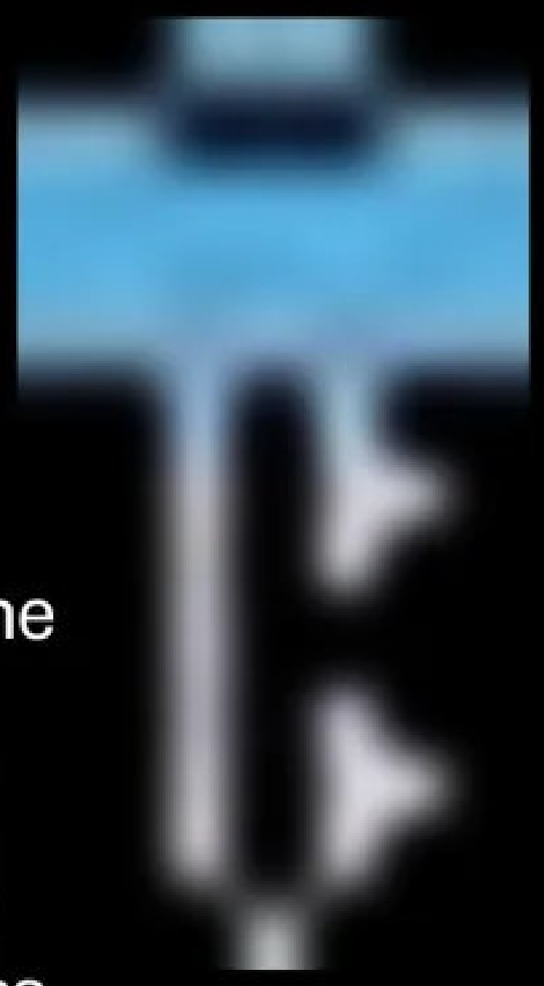
THE MOST POPULAR GAME OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Pac-Man

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

CERTIFICATE

The most successful coin operated game in history is PAC-MAN. From its launch in 1981 to 1987 a total of 293,822 PAC-MAN machines were installed around the world. PAC-MAN was designed by Toru Iwatani of Namco Ltd., Japan



natural way, rather than in a robotic, pre-defined manner, which makes the game seem more real.

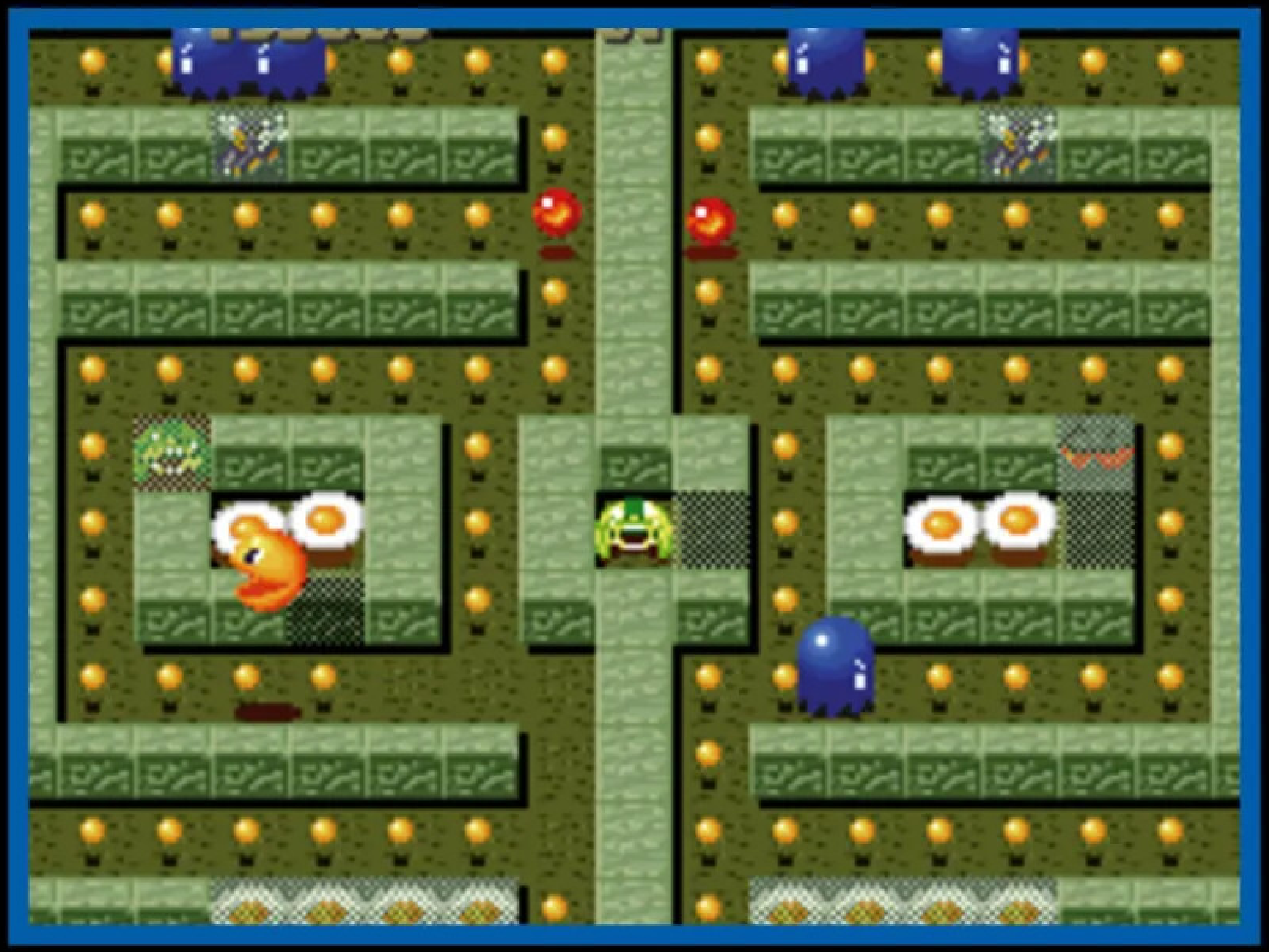
The attacks aren't entirely one-sided, however; as noted earlier, the maze contains four power pellets, which temporarily transform the ghosts into a 'scared' blue form, enabling Pac-Man to turn the tables, hunt them down and eat them. "The inspiration for the power pellet was the spinach in the TV cartoon *Popeye*," explains Iwatani. "The power pellets didn't exist in the planning stages at all – they emerged during the development stage as a feature for turning the game around, and made the game vastly more interesting."

Although the completed *Pac-Man* ended up shipping well over quarter of a million units, Iwatani notes that the game's impact wasn't immediate: "In Japan, the game met with a lukewarm reception at first, but it then proved to be a long seller over several years." Amusingly, its success in the USA also took people by surprise, with 'experts' of the time judging *Rally-X* to be 1980's game to watch. However, Iwatani's ability to attract all kinds of gamers, rather than just teenagers keen on blowing up aliens, hit home. "Overseas, it was a massive hit – people who normally didn't play videogames became avid fans, and there was much media coverage of the playing of *Pac-Man*," he recalls.

The game has also stood the test of time, being converted to myriad platforms, and it regularly appears on compilations and various online services to this day. "I designed the game so that players of any age and either sex could play it straight away, without reading a game manual," says Iwatani of his creation's enduring popularity. "The game also contains numerous detailed stratagems for reading the players' psychology."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Iwatani claims he'd not revise his game, given the chance to go back and do so. "At the design stage, there was a 'shutter' feature, which opened and closed, acting as an obstacle in the path of the maze," he says. "But I'd change nothing from the final game. Why? Because *Pac-Man* is complete to such an extent that to add or to subtract anything at all would be unacceptable."

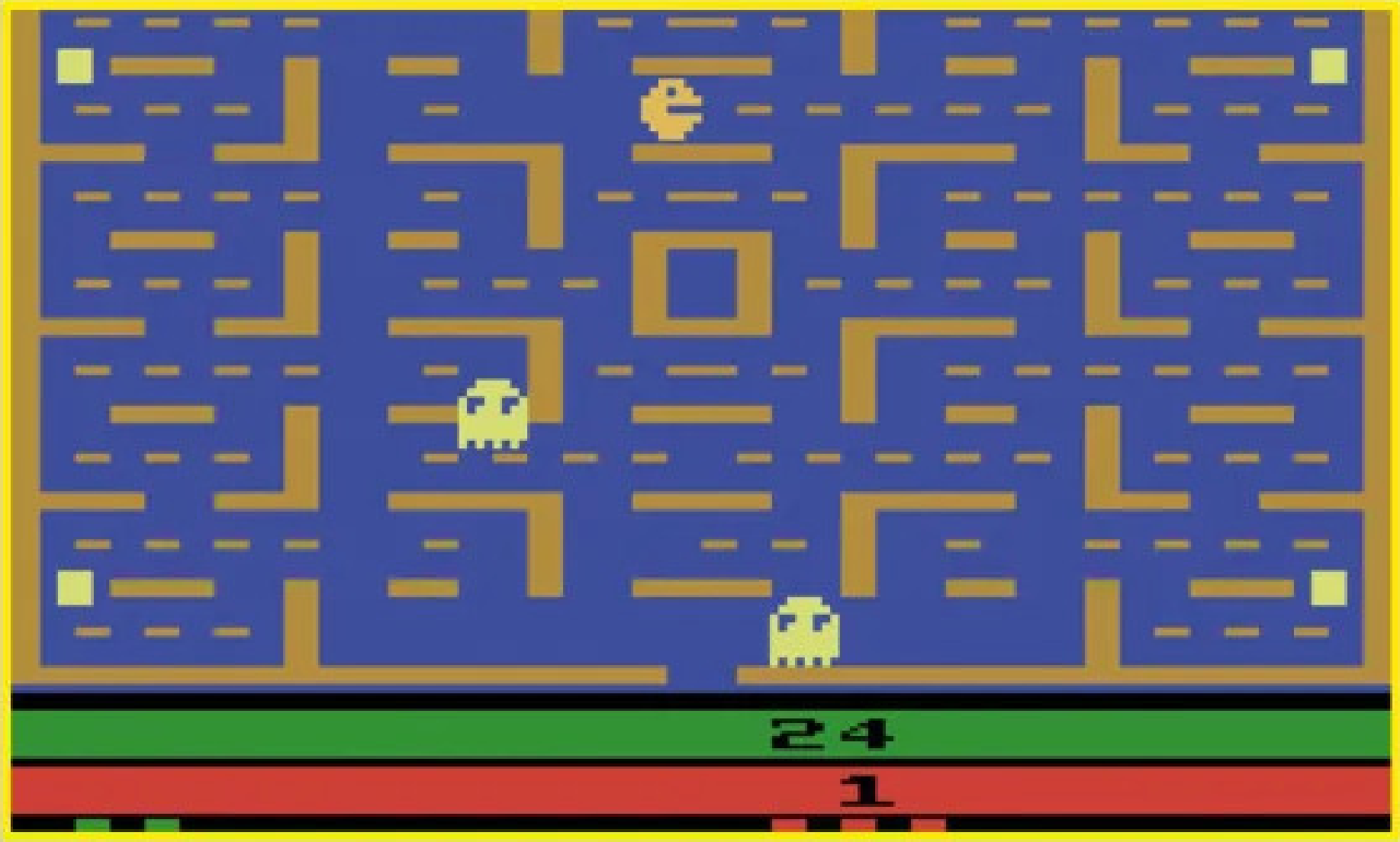
Despite having worked on a range of titles over the years, including *Time Crisis* and *Ridge Racer*, it's clear Iwatani's heart always remained with his disc-based creation. During the '80s,



▲ Semicon's mid-'90s *Hyper Pacman* provides an almost Bomberman-like take on *Pac-Man*, throwing strange boss fights into the mix.

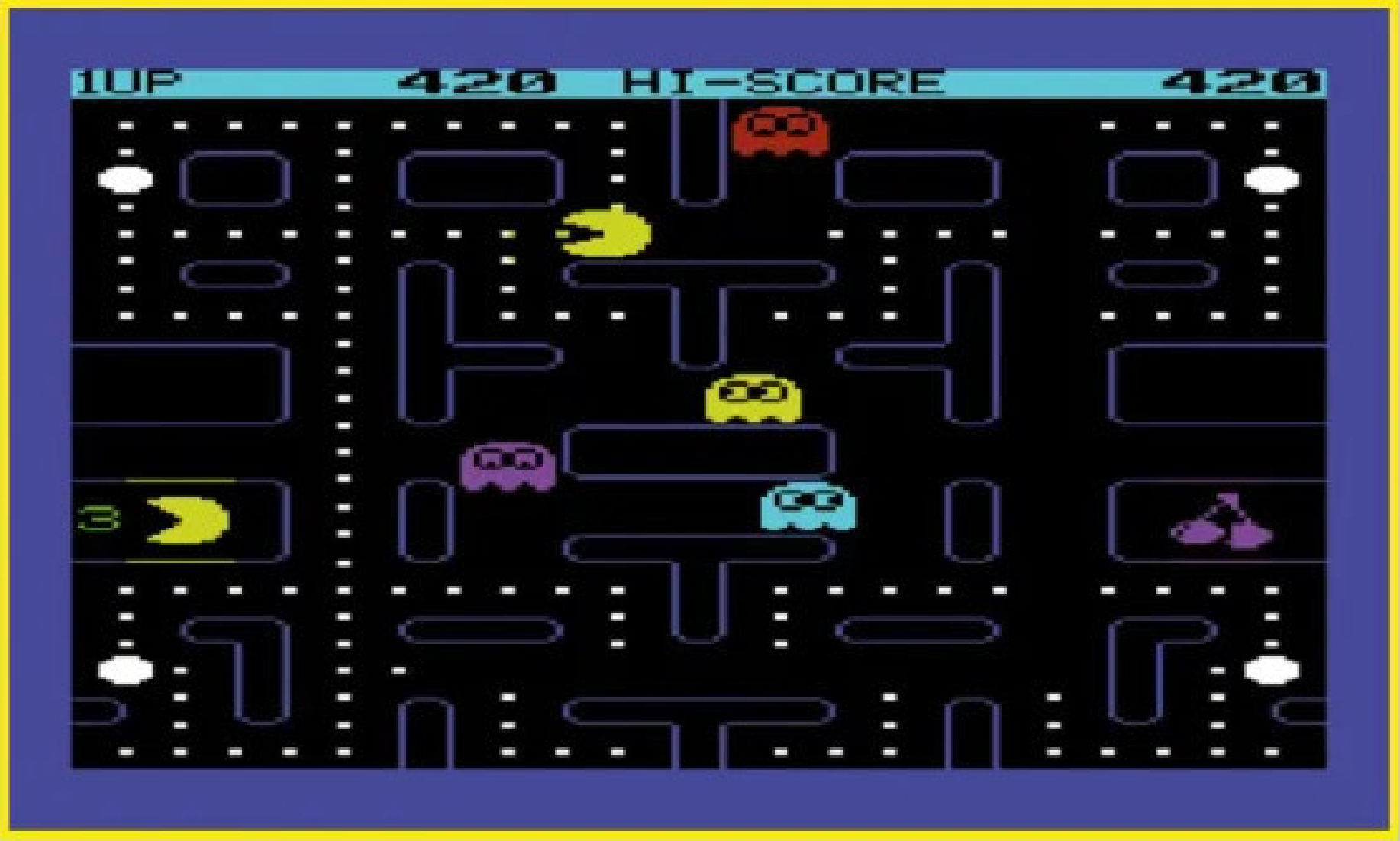
# Conversion capers

## With myriad Pac-Man conversions available, we look at the most curious examples



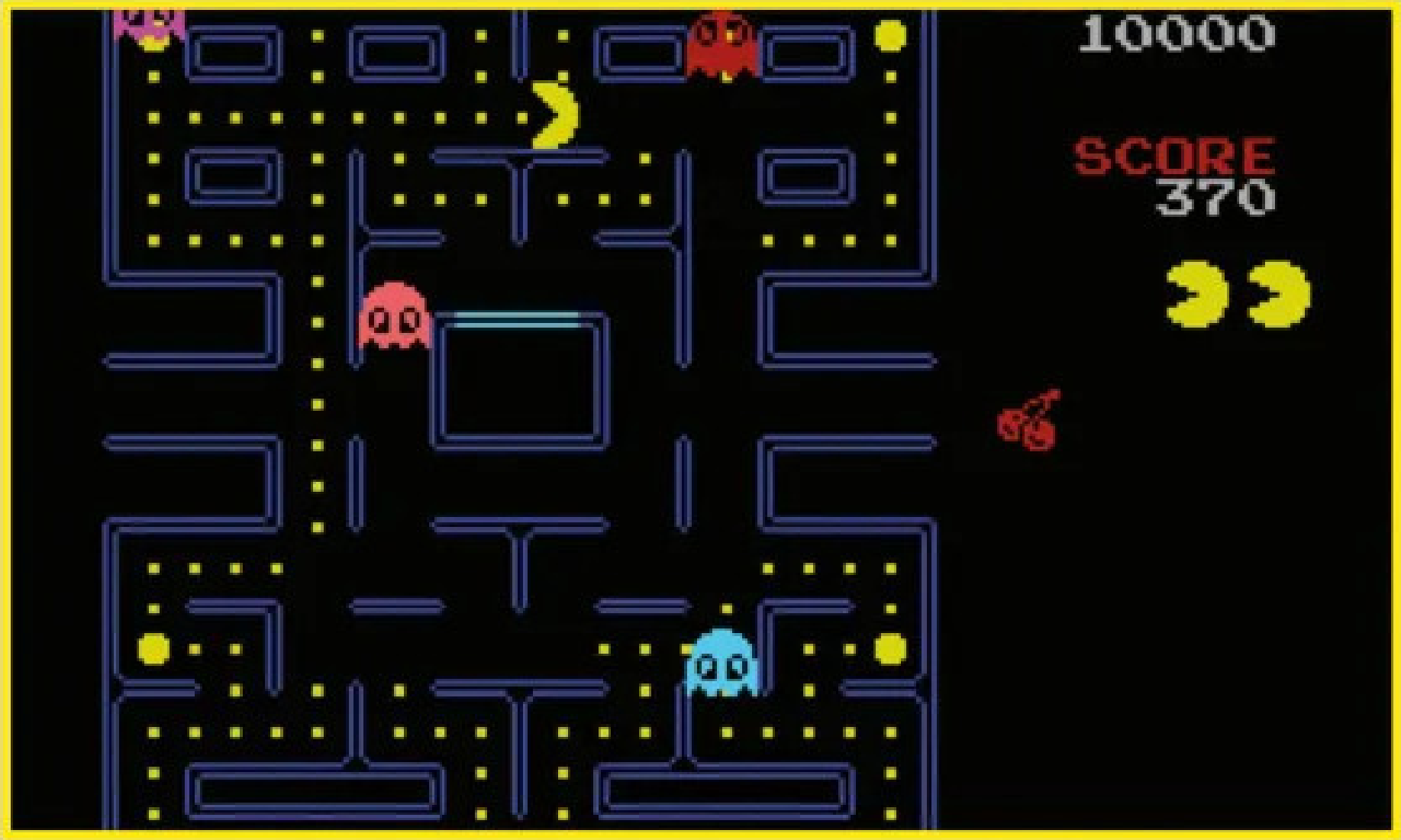
### ATARI 2600

Embarrassingly drawing attention to itself via an 'Atari National *Pac-Man* Day', this conversion supposedly resulted from marketing pressure. A flickering mess, the game's dreadful maze layout and ropey gameplay led to a shortfall in sales, with five million cartridges left gathering dust.



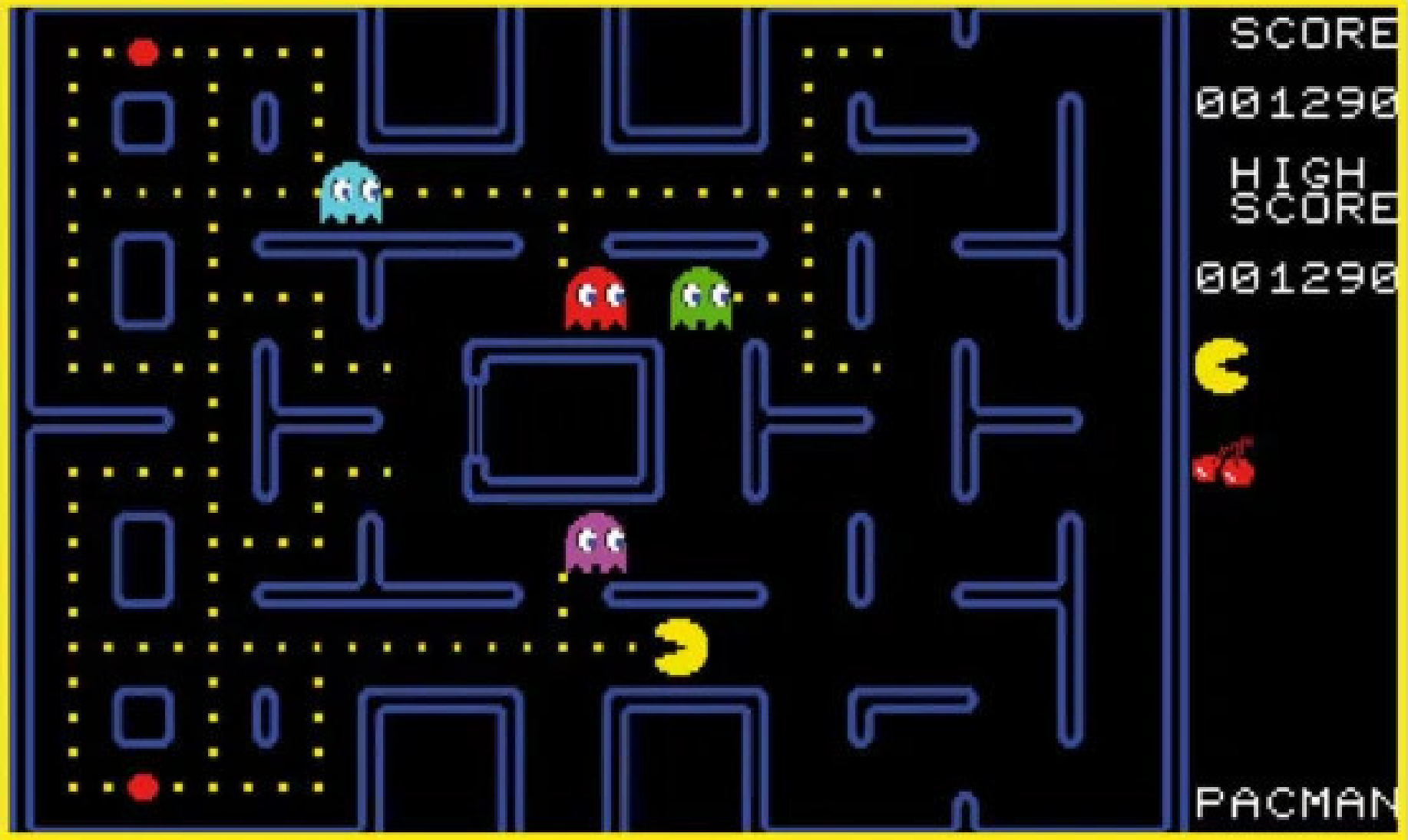
### VIC-20

While most VIC-20 owners had Atarisoft's dire conversion, Japanese Commodore fans were enjoying HAL Laboratories' superior take on *Pac-Man*. Commodore renamed the game *Jelly Monsters* outside of Japan, but fell foul of Atari's legal hammer of doom, and withdrew the game.



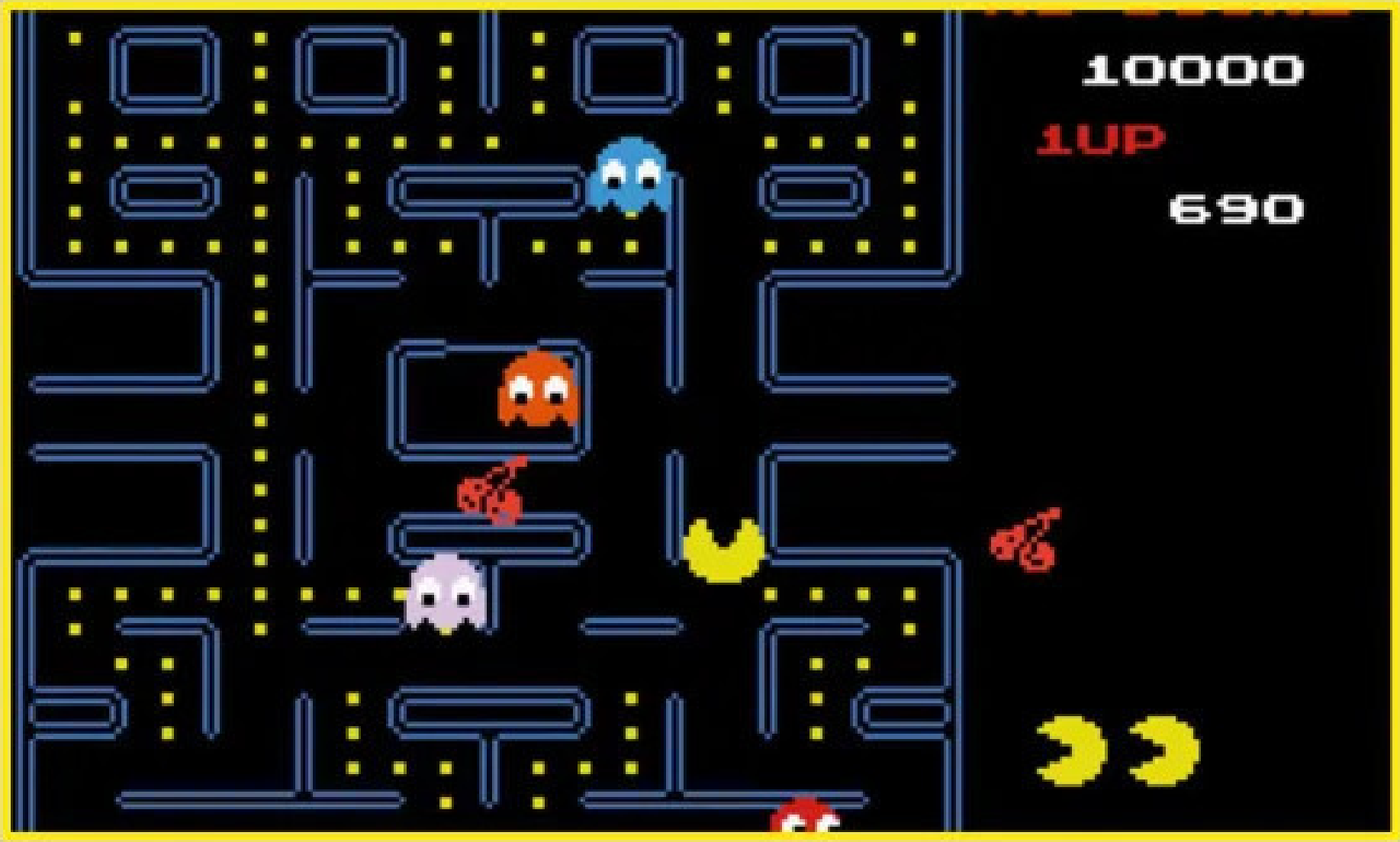
### MSX

Namco's 1984 MSX release eschewed the horizontally stretched mazes of most home conversions, instead shifting the score display to the side of a smaller maze that retained the arcade parent's aspect ratio. This device remains in use today – eg: in *Pac-Man* plug-and-play TV games.



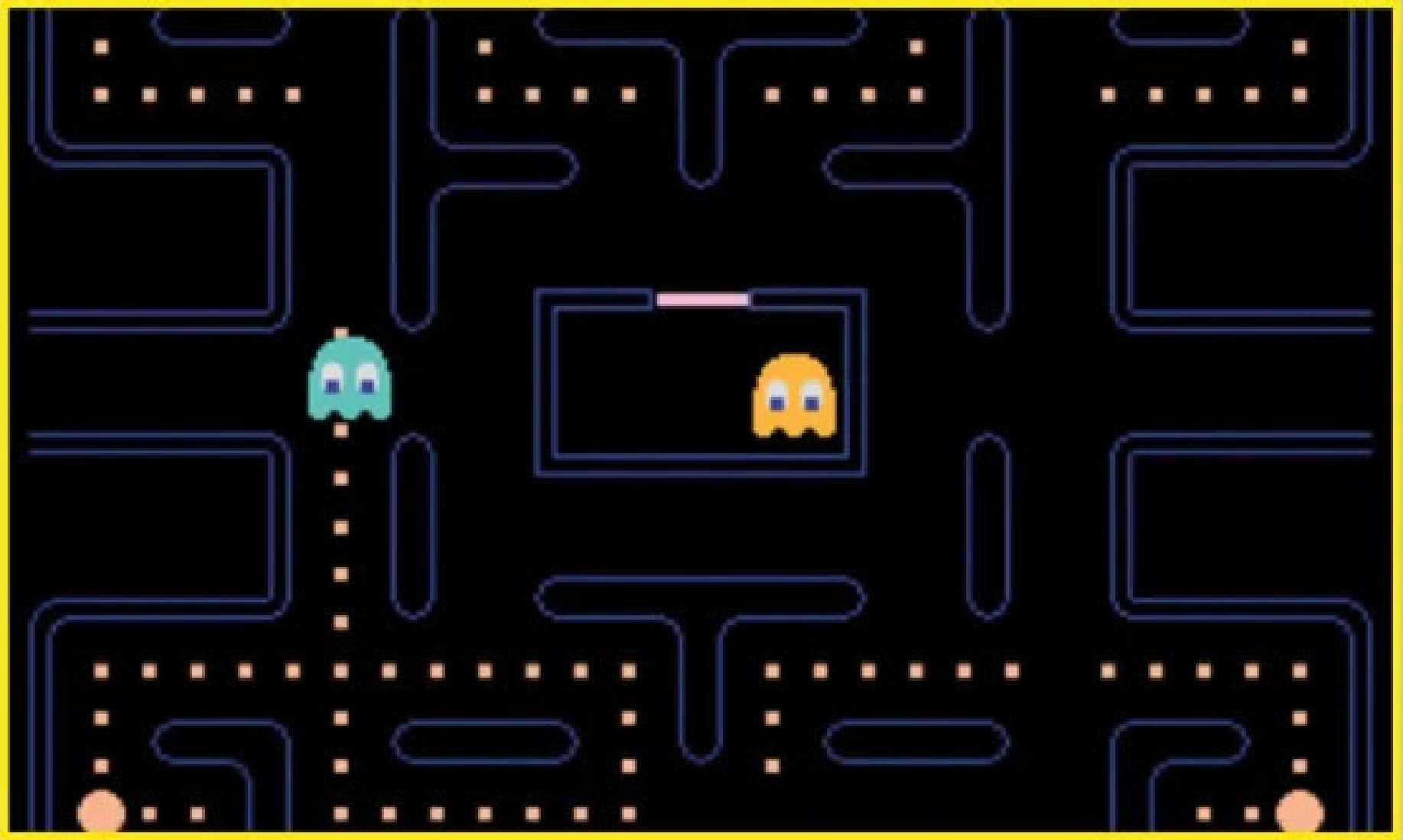
### FUJITSU FM-7

Instead of following the MSX conversion's method of dealing with varying aspect ratios between arcade and home screens, 1984's Japanese FM-7 *Pac-Man* release rotates the maze by 90 degrees. This means no stretched maze and no weeny graphics, but the change disorientates.



### GAME BOY ADVANCE

A touch of the crazies descended over Nintendo HQ when the NES Classics line reached Europe. With collectable boxes ditched and prices raised, you got a botched port of the bog-standard NES conversion for more than the superior *Pac-Man Collection* cost at the time. Nice.

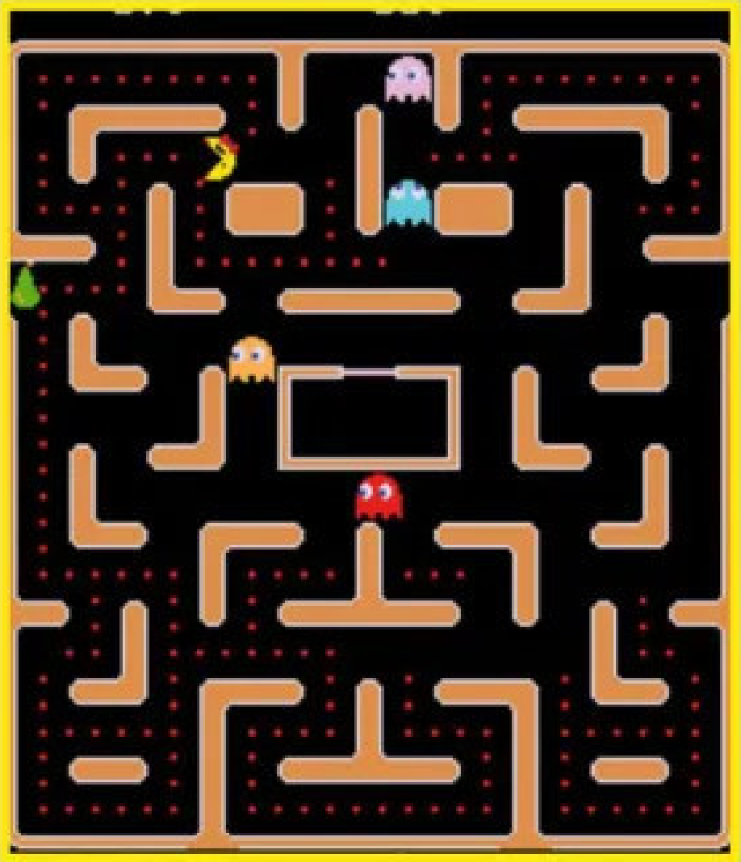


### iPHONE

The *Pac-Man* conversion for Apple's handheld is mostly unremarkable and accurate, but the lack of tactile controls results in curious control methods: 'swiping', an on-screen D-pad, and tilting to move Pac-Man. Swiping works best; directions are confirmed via an on-screen joystick.

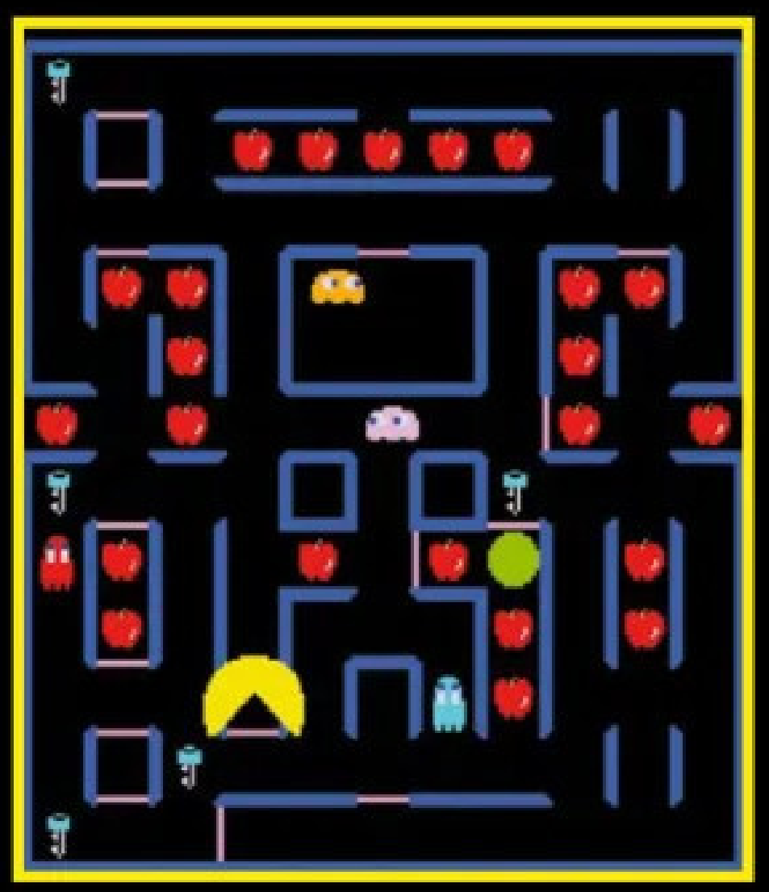
# Pac-Man milestones

A brief overview of notable arcade-based



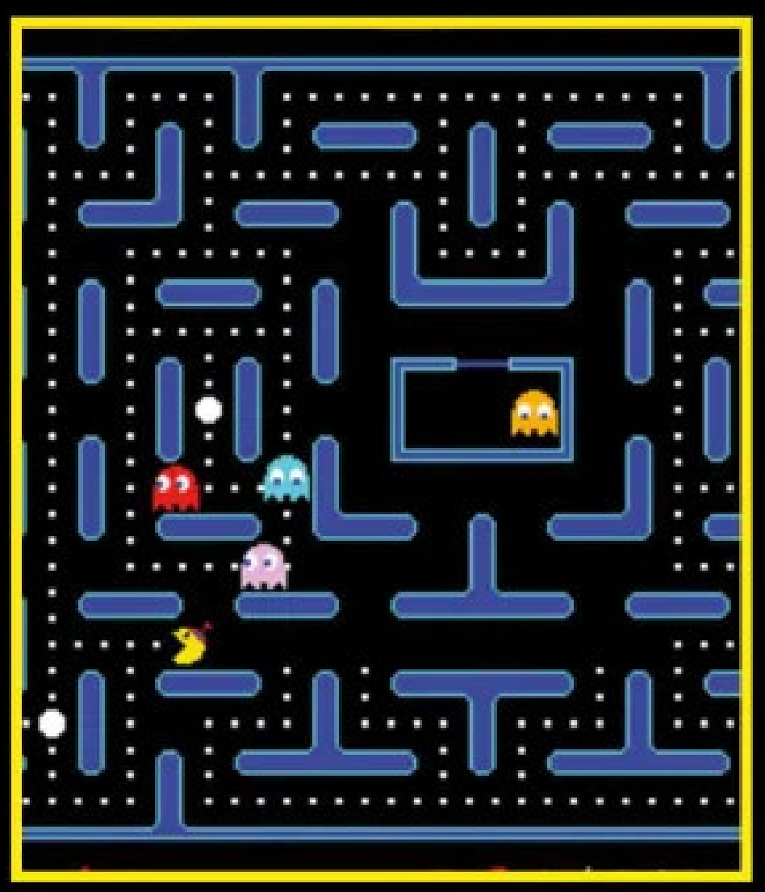
### MS PAC-MAN (1981)

Fed up waiting for Namco's *Pac-Man* sequel, US distributor Midway struck a blow for gender equality by releasing GCC's *Pac-Man* hack. Along with speeding up the game and amending the hero, *Ms Pac-Man* includes new mazes, more varied ghost behaviour and moving fruit.



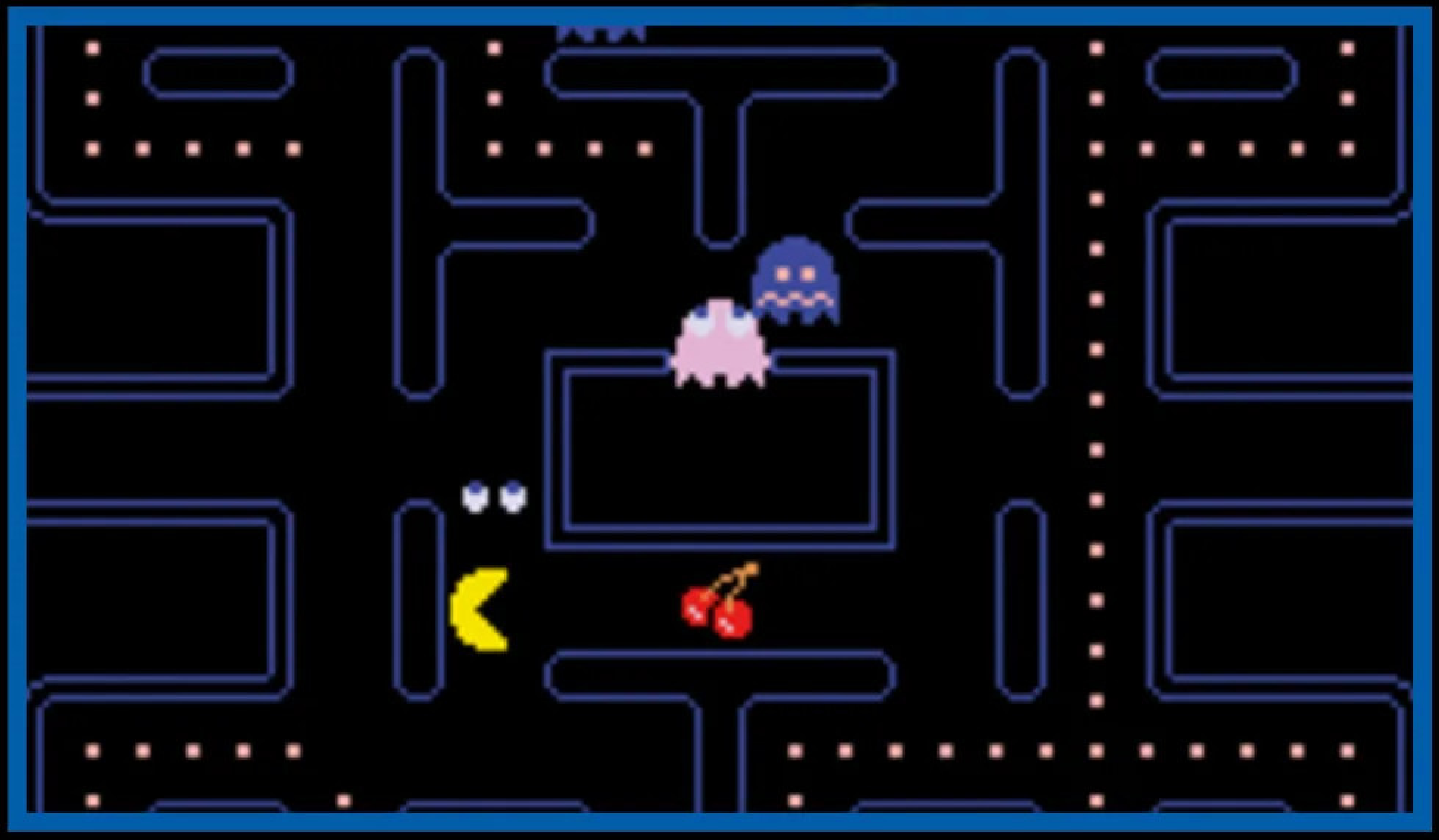
### SUPER PAC-MAN (1982)

Namco's *Pac-Man* sequel disappointed many outside of Japan, due to the fact that the gameplay was substantially altered. You still clear mazes, but munch targets behind gates that open when keys are guzzled. A 'super power dot' makes Pac-Man grow Hulk-like, to devour everything in his path.

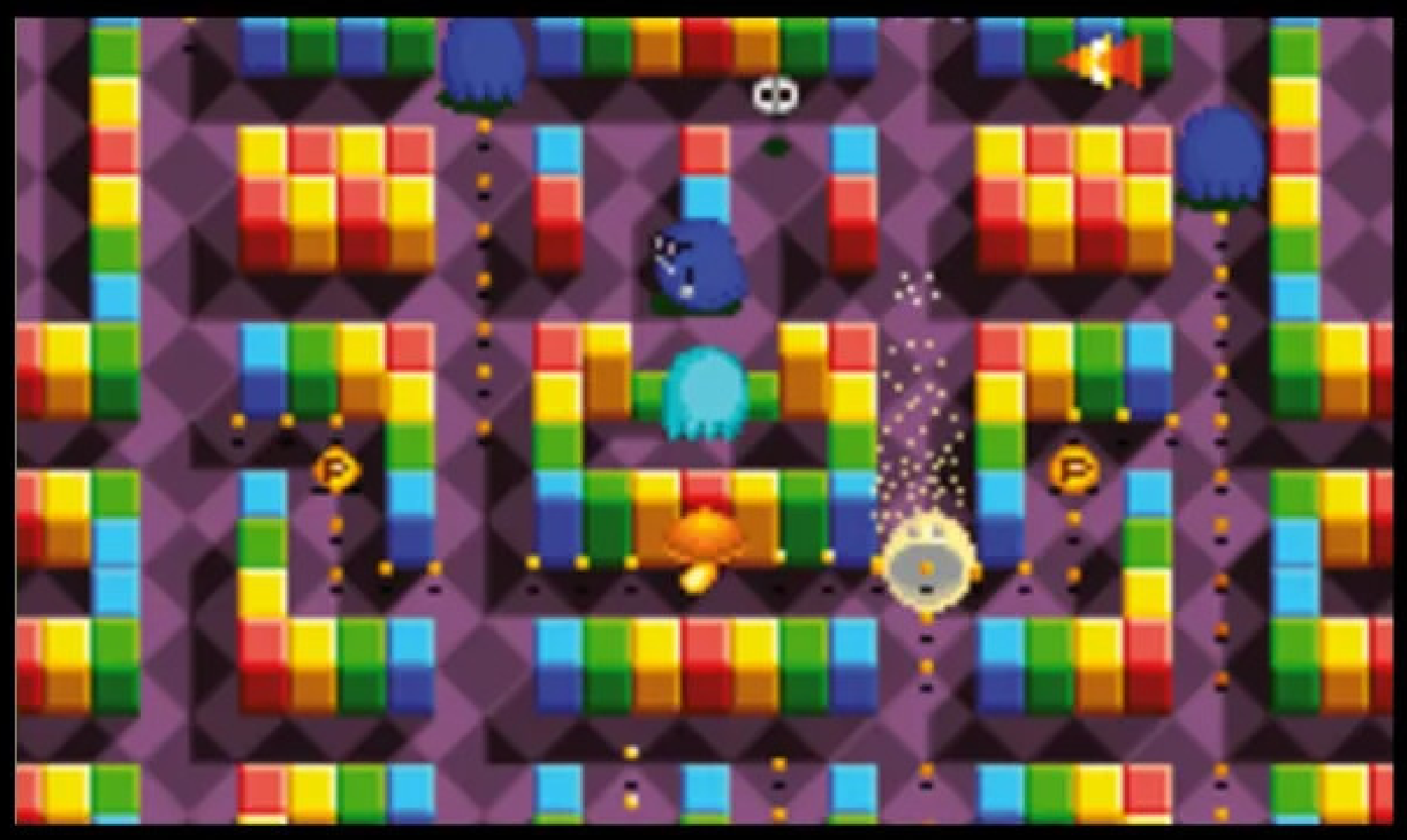


### JR. PAC-MAN (1983)

Midway again did the naughty, creating this effort without permission, and Namco terminated Midway's licensing agreement. Namco still doesn't recognise the game as official. With its scrolling levels obliterating the original's tightly honed strategic gameplay, it's easy to see why.



A rampaging *Pac-Man* on level one devours a ghost before laying eyes on the cherries. Meanwhile, a resurrected Pinky sets out for revenge.



*Pac-Man Arrangement,* released in 1996 as part of *Namco Classics Collection Vol.2,* is a successful *Pac-Man* update, with pretty graphics and interesting new features.

## DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

- **LIBBLERABBLE!**(PICTURED)
  SYSTEM: ARCADE
  YEAR: 1983
- **PAC-LAND**
  SYSTEM: ARCADE
  YEAR: 1984
- **RIDGE RACER**
  SYSTEM: ARCADE
  YEAR: 1993

he was involved in both *Pac-Land* and *Pac-Mania*, with the former being his favourite. "It pioneered action videogames in which the scene flows horizontally. According to its creator, Shigeru Miyamoto, Nintendo's *Super Mario Bros.* was influenced by *Pac-Land*," he says, proudly.

However, it was during 2006 that Iwatani finally got the chance to both return to *Pac-Man*'s roots and design a brand new engaging, modern-day evolution of his original creation. Instead of the arcades, the chosen platform was Xbox Live Arcade, and the game became *Pac-Man Championship Edition* (*PMCE*).

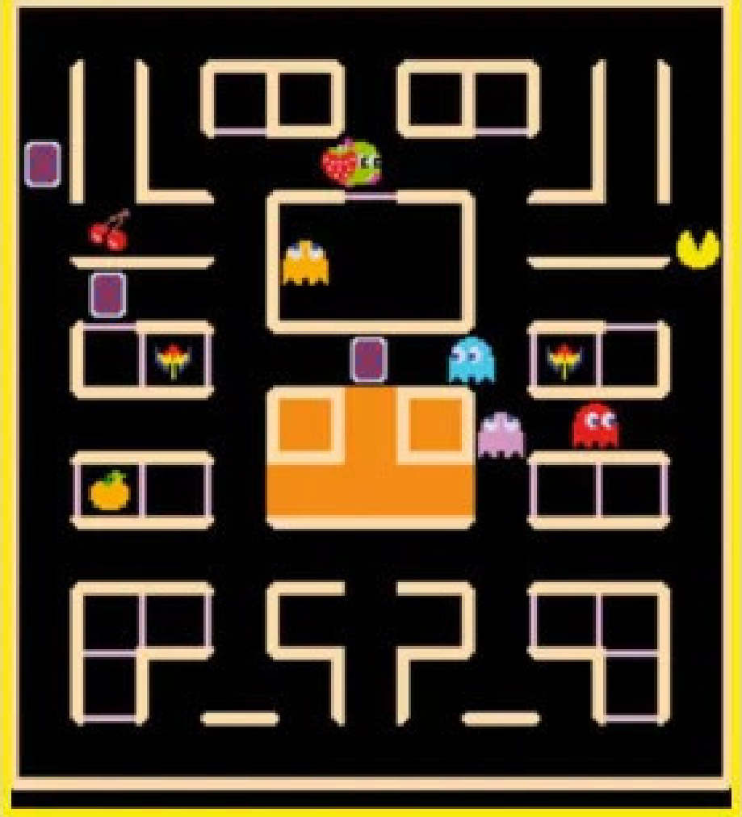
"The time was right for a next-generation *Pac-Man*, because the Xbox Live Arcade environment supports real-time competition with score-ranking via the internet, and improved design through its hardware specification," explains Iwatani about the origins of the highly acclaimed game. "My aim with the game was to achieve legitimate evolution, with simplicity of game design and absence of the superfluous as my guiding principles, because, in my opinion, few players look for complexity in gameplay."

Guided by the same ground rules that defined *Pac-Man* – immediacy, simplicity, immunity to language and cultural differences, and "that sense of wanting to play and have fun, which is what the world's videogame players are looking for" – *Pac-Man Championship Edition* broadly retains the original's core gameplay, tasking the player with navigating a maze to eat dots, fruit and power pellets and avoiding roaming ghosts. However, some major changes were made to the formula, in order to keep the game relevant and ensure it was more than just the original game reskinned.

Rather than the player having to clear a maze to proceed, *Pac-Man Championship Edition* plays like a time-attack game, and the player has a strict time limit in which to score as many points as possible. As with *Pac-Man*, this is done by consuming dots and 'scared' ghosts, but the longer you stay alive, the more each dot is worth (and the faster the game becomes). Also, the maze is now split in half. Clear one half of dots and bonus fruit appears in the other; eat said fruit and new dots are spawned in the previously cleared half. "The horizontal maze came about due to the prevalence of widescreen displays," explains Iwatani, noting that the split-maze device also creates non-stop action, unlike the original *Pac-Man*, which 'interrupts' players upon a level's completion. "And the timeout feature increases the sense of speed and excitement in the game, making it a very thrilling experience to play. Also, score ranking via the internet provides competition, which has been a great success." Iwatani adds that one of the key aims was to have people worldwide competing, the logical modern-day equivalent of '80s' high-score table on the original *Pac-Man*. It works brilliantly, ensuring you'll always want to return for one more game.

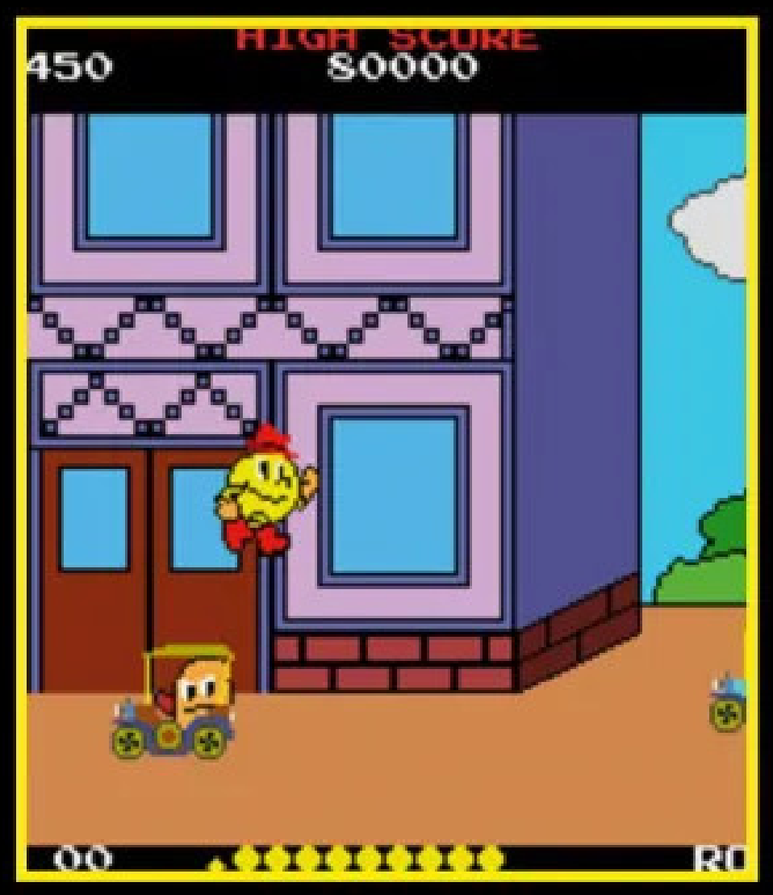
Perhaps ironically, *PMCE* was, unlike *Pac-Man*, critically acclaimed right from the start. 1UP.com ranked it alongside *Geometry Wars* in terms of a classic game

## Pac-Man follow-ups



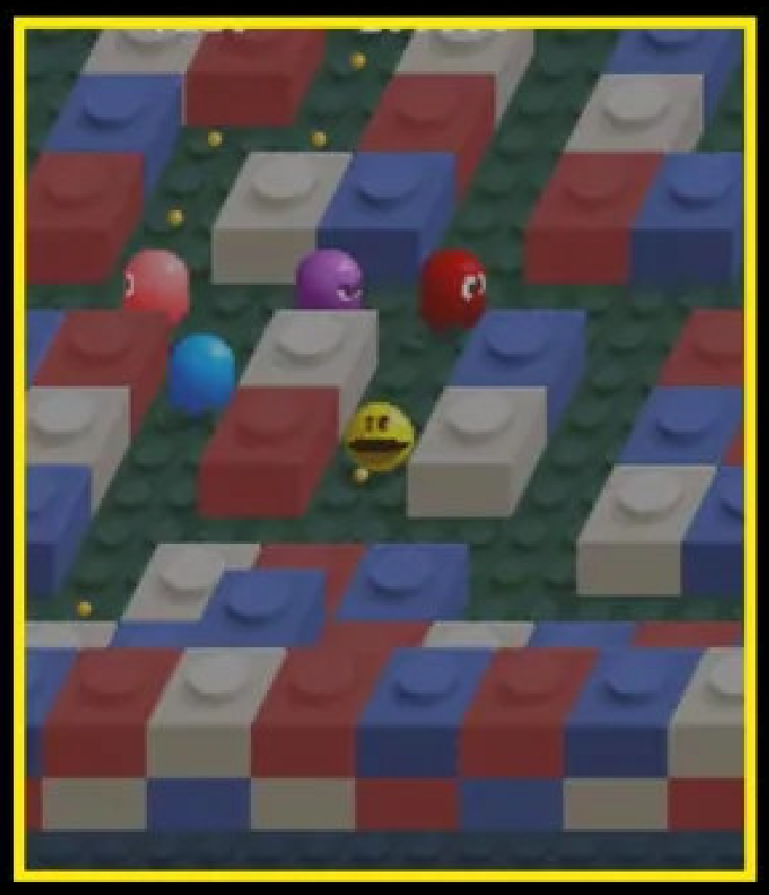
### PAC & PAL (1983)

Here, Namco again moved further from the original *Pac-Man*. Ghosts can only be stunned rather than eaten, and now flipping cards opens gates to reveal items. The 'Pal' of the title is the infuriating Miru, who makes off with your bonus items, taking them to the inaccessible ghost pen.



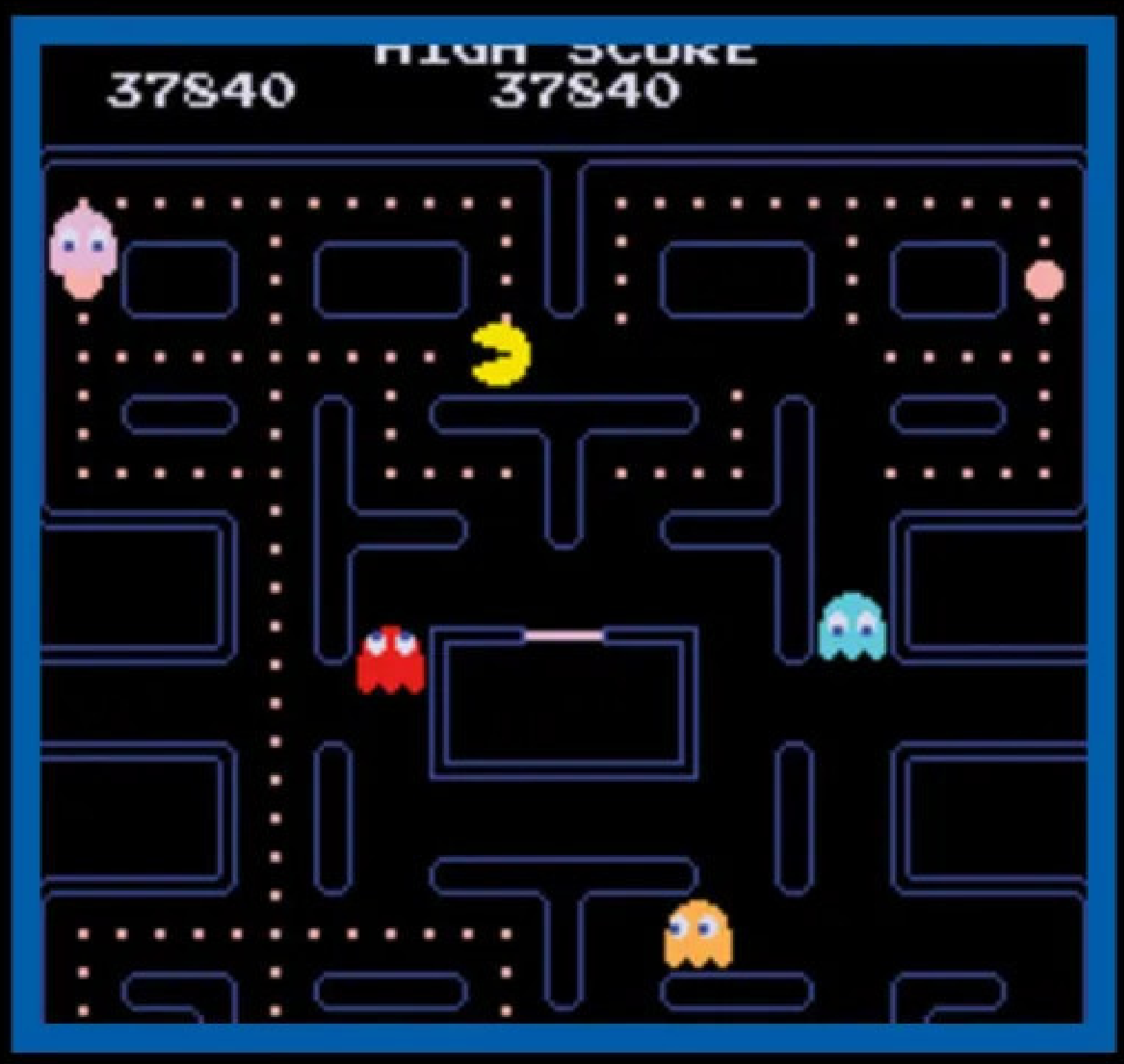
### PAC-LAND (1984)

Pac-Man finally left the maze, gained legs, arms and a face, and was tasked with battling through this early side-scrolling arcade game, its levels peppered with *Pac-Man* imagery. Although repetitious, the game is initially fun and it's more successful than Namco's previous two efforts.

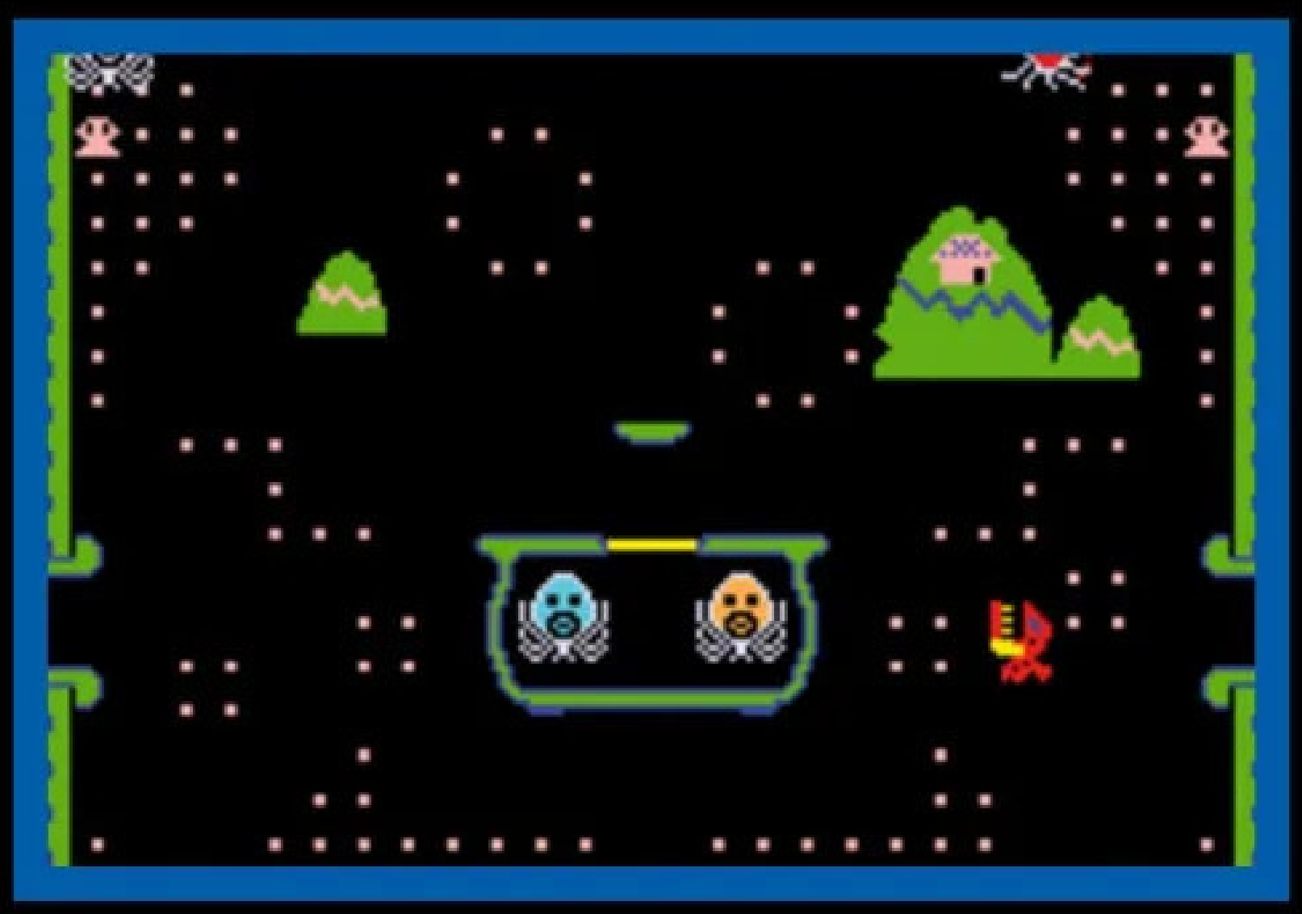


### PAC-MANIA (1987)

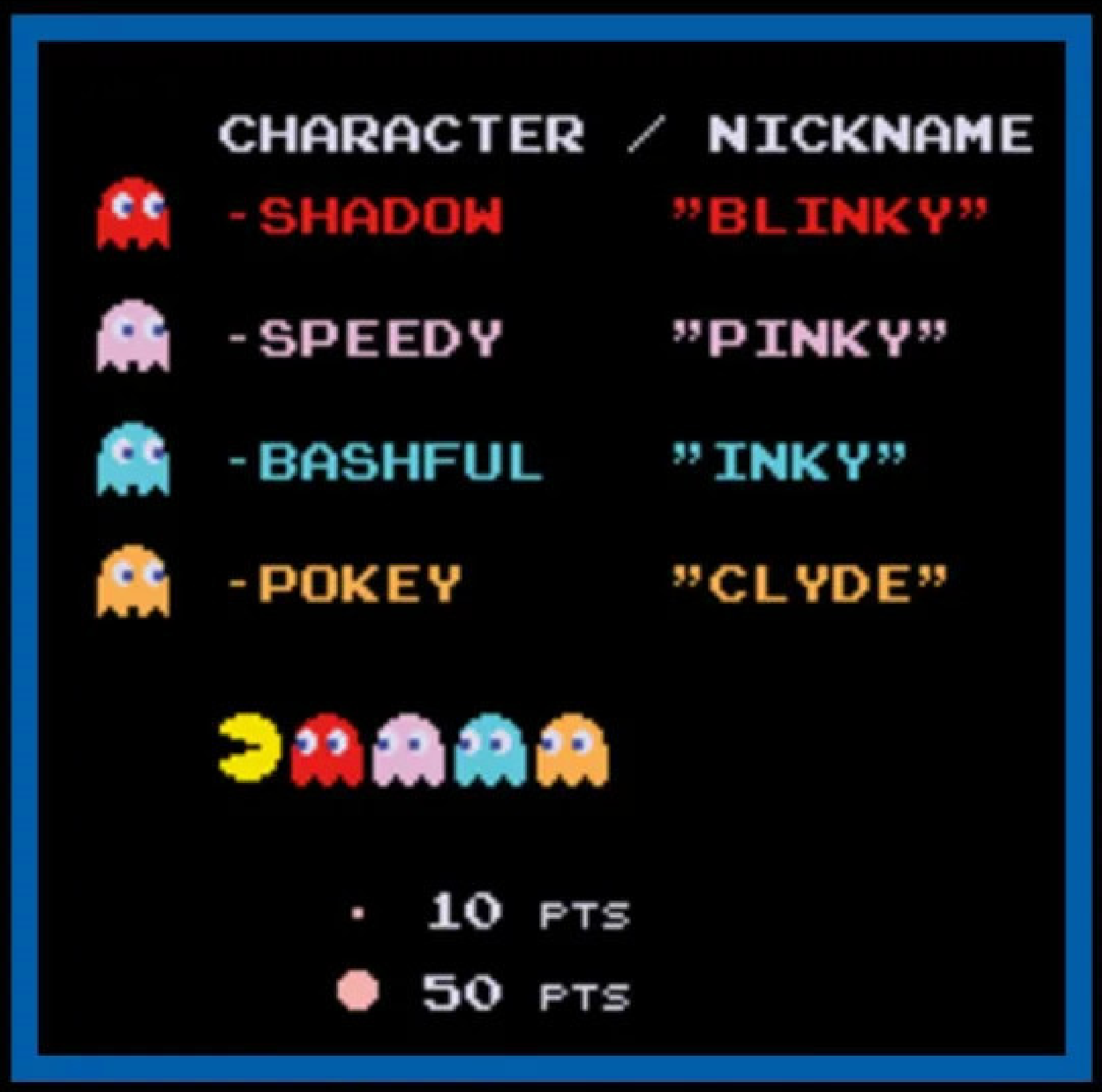
Pac-Man finally returned to his roots in *Pac-Mania*, although as you can see his surroundings are markedly different. The isometric maze scrolls, and the ghosts tend to roam in packs. Although, in Pac-Man's favour, he can now jump and he occasionally finds bonus items that speed him up.



Several levels in and the ghosts become faster – you have little time to eat them after eating a power pellet.

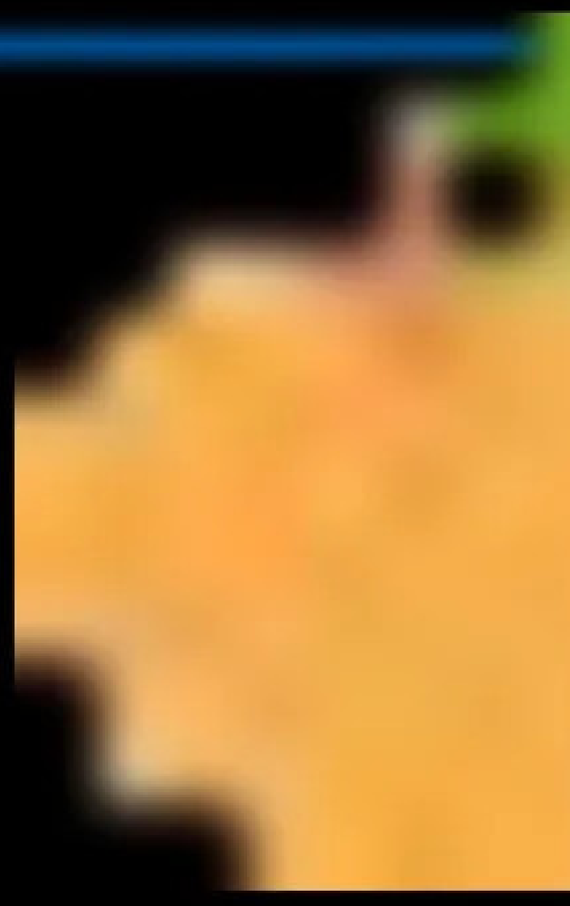


*Piranha* is a decent *Pac-Man* hack, removing the maze and thereby creating a different and tougher game.



| CHARACTER / | NICKNAME |
|---|---|
| -SHADOW | "BLINKY" |
| -SPEEDY | "PINKY" |
| -BASHFUL | "INKY" |
| -POKEY | "CLYDE" |

· 10 PTS
● 50 PTS



> ***"Pac-Man's guiding principle is 'fun first'"***
>
> TORU IWATANI

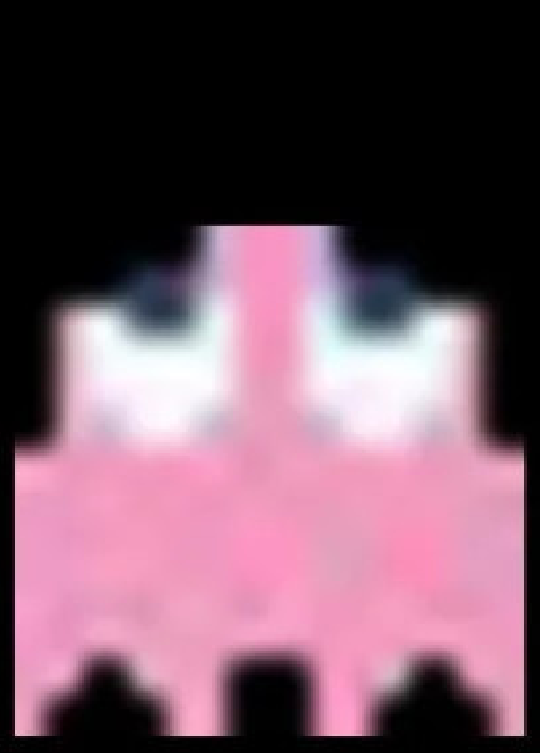
**With grateful thanks to Tetsuya Hayashi for invaluable assistance in realising this interview.**

format being reworked, noting that it was "a lot more than just a tarted-up *Pac-Man*." Joystiq's Jared Rea blogged: "A better name for it would have been *Pac-Man 2*, […] a name that gets the point across that *Pac-Man Championship Edition* is the first true sequel to the game since *Ms Pac-Man*."

Iwatani modestly suggests that some of the acclaim might be due to low expectations for a *Pac-Man* game, and says the response of game players exceeded his expectations, citing the many internet-based critiques that offered "splendidly glowing evaluations". (Happily, and despite claims to the contrary, Iwatani also assures us that *PMCE* is not necessarily to be his swansong, since he continues to be involved in videogame production. Although at this point in time he's yet to have been significantly involved in a new game in the way he was with PMCE. He's not left our thoughts completely however, as he made a cameo appearance alongside Pac-Man in Adam Sandler's recent movie *Pixels*.

With more than 30 years of experience in videogames design, including the most iconic games character of them all, Iwatani is now, perhaps suitably, involved in teaching aspects of videogames design to students at Tokyo Polytechnic University, along with conducting research into games for social purposes. Although *Pac-Man* has always remained popular throughout the years, we wondered what Iwatani made of the games industry's tendency towards over-complication and movie-like games, along with the relatively recent resurgence in retro-orientated titles. "We should carefully gauge the preferences of light users, who normally don't play videogames, and the preferences of videogame aficionados, and then design products to suit each," he suggests, thoughtfully. "A sumptuous party dress may be of limited practical value in daily living, and the same applies to over-elaborate videogames in the videogame market." On retro titles – 'pick up and play' games popularised by the internet, XBLA, Nintendo DS, Wii and iPhone – Iwatani thinks this might be a sign that the actual game, rather than aesthetics, is again becoming the main concern for developers: "Hardware specifications 20 or 30 years ago restricted powers of expression, and so the rules of the game were decisive in attracting users. The current boom in retro games is evidence of a universal fascination with game-playing itself."

We finish off the interview by returning to the subject of *Pac-Man*. We're keen to know how Iwatani feels to be the designer behind a game that almost everyone knows – one that perhaps only *Tetris* can challenge in terms of its incredible widespread appeal? "People view the work in different ways, from different viewpoints. Some see it as being broad and shallow. For others, it is narrow yet deep and praised," considers Iwatani. "What is gratifying about this is that people find such different reasons for loving it." And as a final word, Iwatani reckons that there are still things his 38-year-old creation can teach modern-day games designers, developers and publishers. "*Pac-Man* is the perfect videogame because its design gives top priority to the player and to a spirit of service," he says. "Its guiding principle is 'fun first'. This concept is in my view invincible and what I look for in the videogame creators of today, that they understand the importance of capturing people's hearts."



# POGO BALL

Combining elements of two other classic toys, the Pogo Stick and the Space Hopper, few toys have gone under as many pseudonyms as the Pogo Ball. It has also been marketed as the Pogobal, Springbal, Lolo Ball or Moon Ball.

Equally confusing is the question of who exactly invented it. Popularly believed to have been created in the United States in 1985, it was actually a product of the '60s, the brainchild of a pair of Belgian inventors, Raphael J Van Der Cleyen and Wilfried F Ribbens. However, it wasn't until 1985 that the toy took off, first in Europe and then in America, and its future instantly became murky when a tortuous legal wrangle ensued over who owned the US patent.

Kids had no interest in such matters (for the record, Hasbro won the court case and was acknowledged as the US patent holder), and spent their time working out how to stay on the Pogo Ball in the first place. With a tough rubber ball (in a figure-of-eight construction) enclosed in a stiff hoop that made the thing look a bit like the planet Saturn, the Pogo Ball was difficult to stand on and even more difficult to stay on once the bouncing started. The ball needed to be gripped with the feet at the same time as bouncing along, which was easier said than done. Rubber-soled shoes or trainers were recommended, as other footwear might make gripping the Pogo Ball too difficult.

***"It has also been marketed as the Pogobal, Springbal, Lolo Ball or Moon Ball"***

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Hasbro
**First released:** 1985
**Expect to pay:** £15

The Hasbro Pogo Ball (or Pogo Bal) needed to be adjusted depending on the weight of the child using it. For smaller children, a little air needed to be let out to achieve the correct bounceability. Deflating too much, however, could cause the central disc to slip off.

Children under the age of eight were not allowed to use the Pogo Ball (but who was really checking?) and there was also a weight restriction, although that was set at a very generous 90kg, ensuring that adults could get involved as well.

A list of hazardous environments where the Pogo Ball should not be used included on roads, on inclined driveways (we can all see where that would lead), near steps or (rather comically) anywhere in the vicinity of sharp objects. Using it in below-zero temperatures could also cause the ball to burst.

Slippage was also an issue if used in wet conditions. Strictly an outdoor toy (although that didn't stop kids from bouncing on it in the living room), a warning was issued against use on wet surfaces or on ice, although some claimed that treacherous conditions just added to the challenge and, therefore, the fun.

### THE LEGACY

The initial Pogo Ball craze was short-lived and sales had taken a nosedive by the start of the '90s, but the appeal of the toy endured, and it continued to be produced under a variety of names from a host of toy manufacturers. Still available to this day, Mookie Toys now markets it as the 'Lo-Lo Ball', while an electronically enhanced version from Little Tikes is known as the Pogo-IT! (as if it needed yet more names).

Cute.
Clever.
Mischievous.
Intelligent.
Dangerous.
STEVEN SPIELBERG PRESENTS
GREMLINS
WES CRAVEN'S
A Nightmare ON ELM STREET
It took God six days to create the Heavens and the Earth…
and Monty Python ninety minutes to screw it up.
MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE
STEVEN SPIELBERG Presents
BACK TO THE FUTURE
A ROBERT ZEMECKIS Film
He was never in time for his classes…
He wasn't in time for his dinner…
Then one day… he wasn't in his time at all.
In the future, cities will become deserts, roads will become battlefields and the hope of mankind will appear as a stranger.
THE ROAD WARRIOR
PART MAN,
PART MACHINE,
ALL COP.
DETROIT POLICE
ROBOCOP
THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
STALLONE
This time he's fighting for his life.
FIRST BLOOD
In This House… If You've
BEETLEJUICE
The Name In Laughter From The Hereafter
Twelve terrorists. One cop.
The odds are against John McClane…
That's just the way he likes it.
BRUCE WILLIS
DIE HARD
COMING THIS JULY
FAME is the glamour of the Great White Way of Broadway and the squalor of 42nd Street; the dream of instant success and the constant reminder of failure; the fine line between a Juilliard Scholarship and dancing
Fame

"BACK TO THE FUTURE"
LLOYD · LEA THOM
SILVESTR
UP THERE WITH THE BEST OF THE BEST.
RUISE · KELLY McGILLIS
TOP GUN
"FAME"
SUMMER

© IMPAwards.com

# 80 FILMS THAT DEFINED THE '80s

## An era of unforgettable adventures and legendary heroes, from street-smart cops to shirtless barbarians…

The '80s was a golden era for the silver screen, one that was full of seminal moments such as Arnie's one-liners, Indiana Jones's bombastic theme tune announcing our hero's arrival, and Mr Miyagi teaching Daniel-san karate.

The decade had everything from time travel (*The Terminator*, *Bill & Ted*), to lampooning corporate culture (*Wall Street*, *Brazil*), to screwball comedies (*Caddyshack*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*). It gave us stars who seemed more at home in this era than any other, such as Kurt Russell, Eddie Murphy and Corey Feldman. The '80s also launched the careers of megastars like Tom Cruise and Bruce Willis.

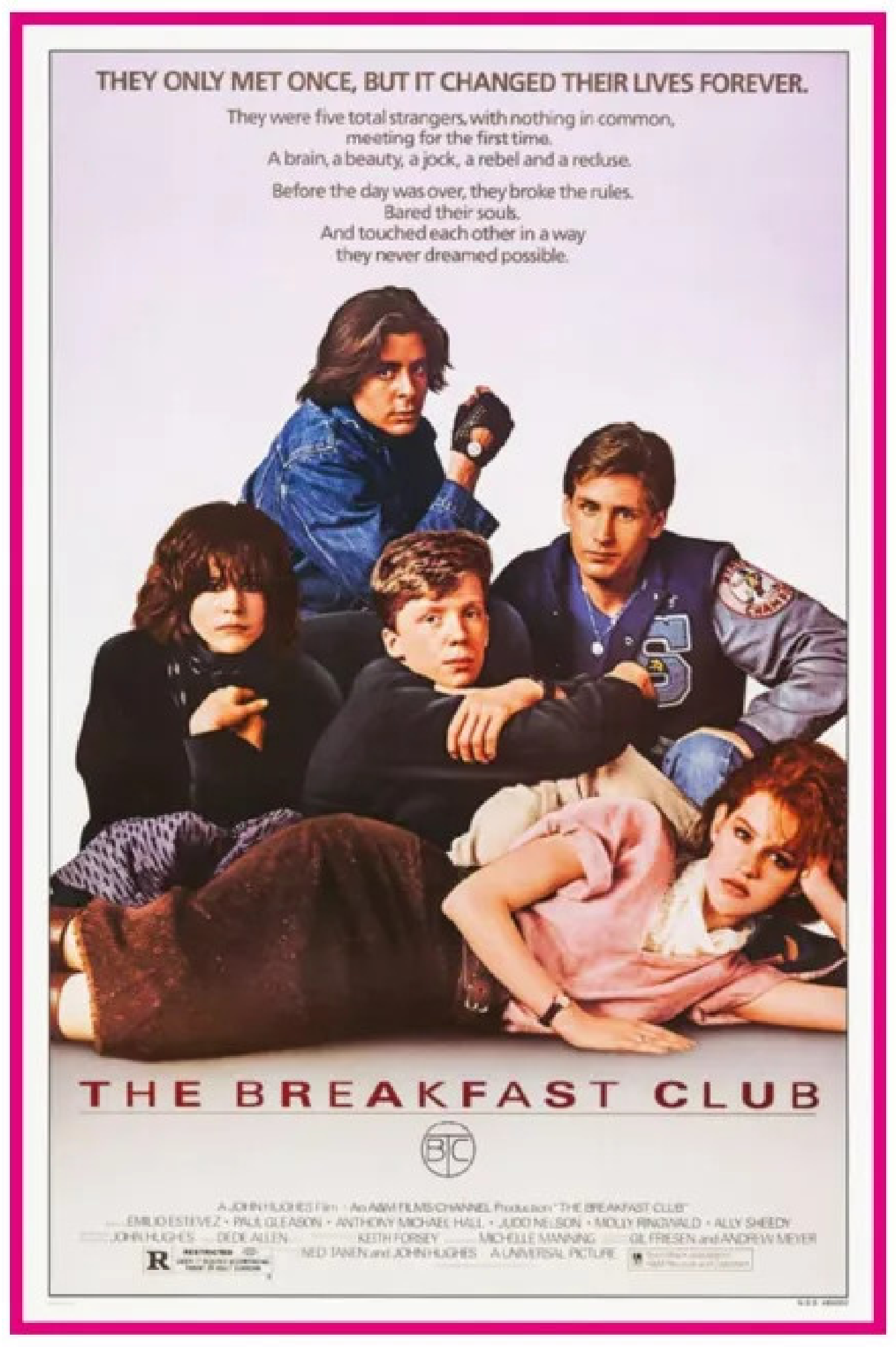
It was the last hoorah for physical special effects, giving kitsch sci-fi films like *NeverEnding Story* and *Labyrinth* a charm that hasn't quite been matched since. And the decade was also the last stand for action films that revelled in excess, the spirit of *Predator* and *Commando* only recently being revived in *The Expendables*.

But really, what defines movies in the '80s is heart. Whether it was the high-school clichés learning to put their differences aside in *The Breakfast Club*, or Marty McFly's touching relationship with Doc in *Back To The Future*, there was a warmth radiating through films of the era that still resonates with audiences today.

## The Breakfast Club

1985

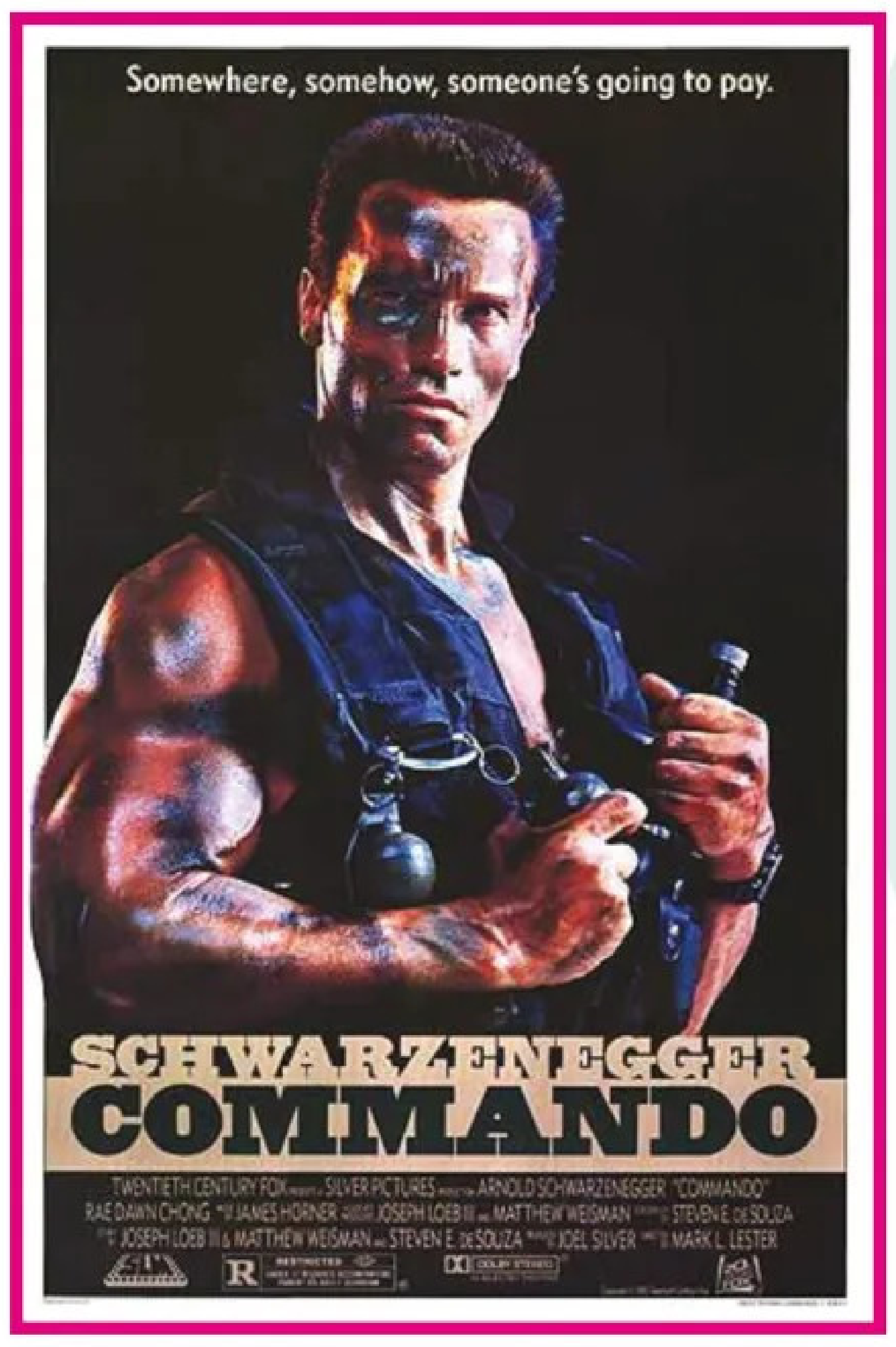
**1** The ultimate teen movie was a deep-dive into the psyche of a group of high-school characters we knew – 'a brain, athlete, basket case, princess and criminal' all sharing detention together. *The Breakfast Club* also has the greatest freeze-frame ending of all time, John Bender punching the air as the opening chords of 'Don't You Forget About Me' ring out. Iconic.

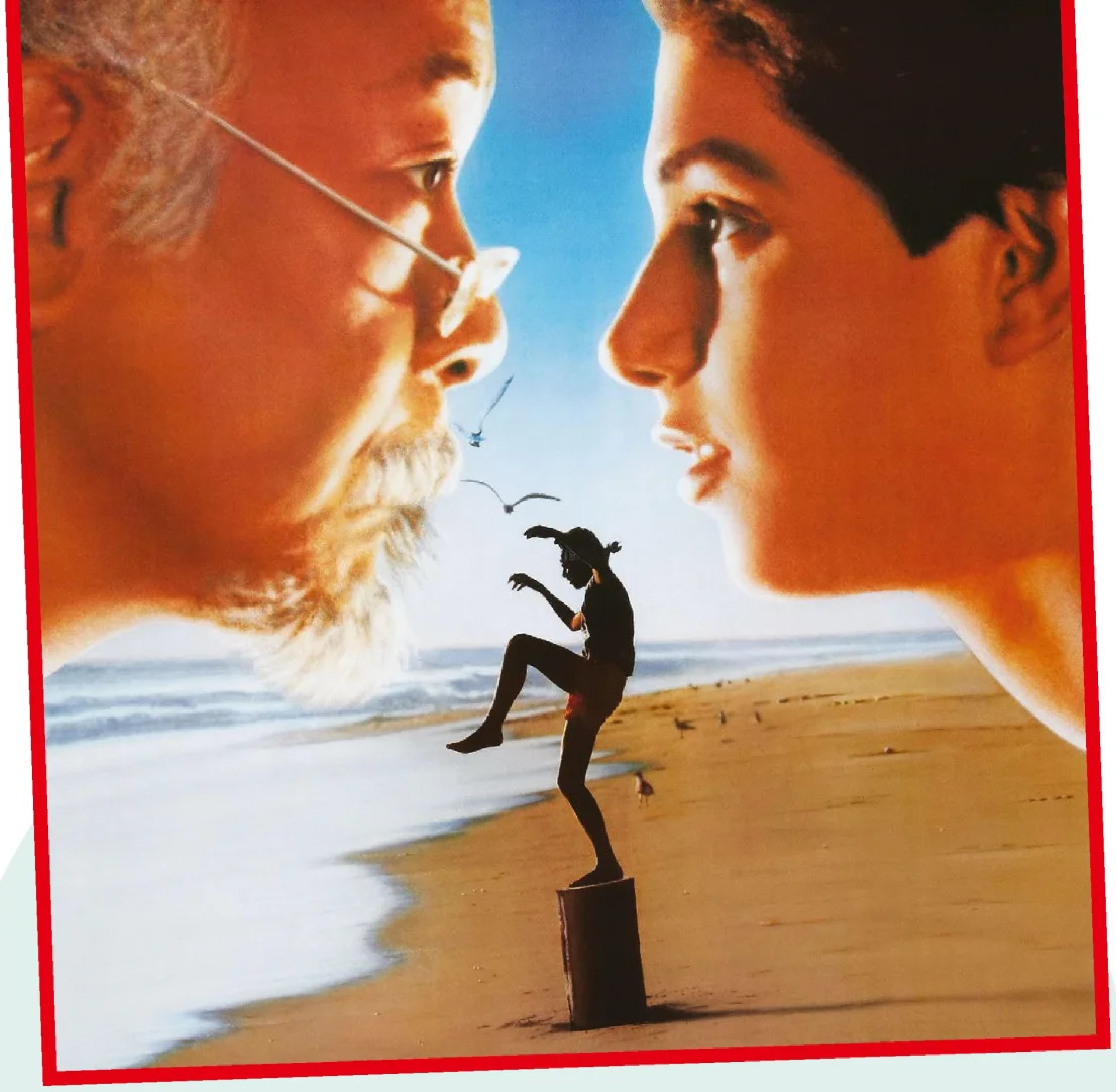

THEY ONLY MET ONCE, BUT IT CHANGED THEIR LIVES FOREVER.
They were five total strangers, with nothing in common, meeting for the first time.
A brain, a beauty, a jock, a rebel and a recluse.
Before the day was over, they broke the rules. Bared their souls. And touched each other in a way they never dreamed possible.
THE BREAKFAST CLUB

## Commando

1985

**2** It might not be considered Arnie's greatest film, but *Commando* is definitely his most fun. The combination of comic-book violence and terrible one-liners sets the stage for Bennett, a chainmail-wearing baddie who looks more Freddie Mercury than terrifying villain. When he let off some steam in the movie's dramatic final showdown, *Commando*'s place in '80s history was secured.


Somewhere, somehow, someone's going to pay.
SCHWARZENEGGER
COMMANDO



## ▲ The Karate Kid

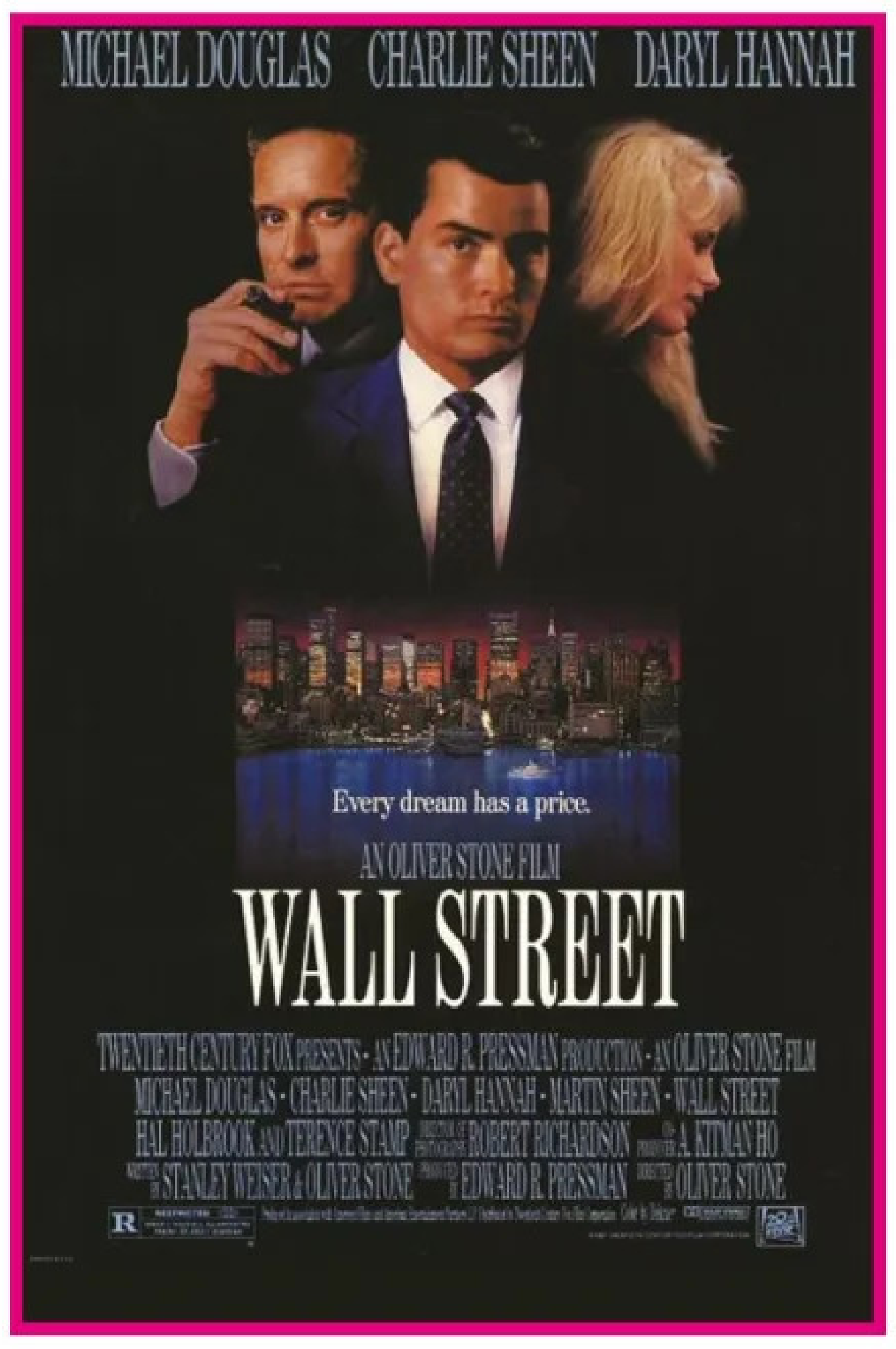
1984

**3** Who needed karate lessons when you could practise wax on, wax off and painting the fence? Mr Miyagi's karate lessons for 'Daniel-san' were unusual but necessary, as the California student found himself being bullied by the Cobra Kai dojo. Daniel's crane-kick became one of the iconic images of the '80s, along with the triumphant 'You're The Best' anthem on the soundtrack.

## Wall Street

1987

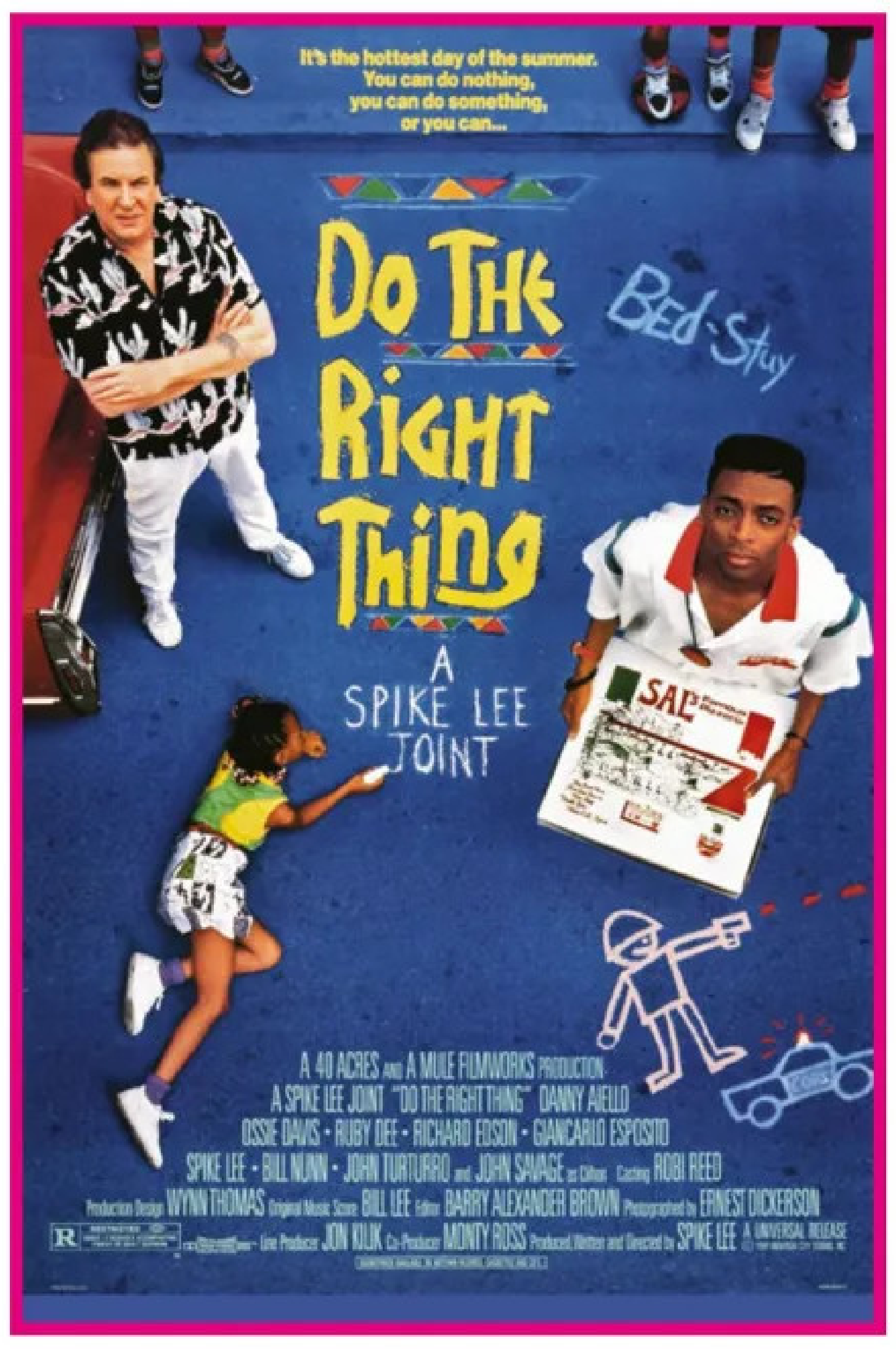
**4** "Greed is good." Gordon Gekko, the crooked corporate raider of *Wall Street*, became an accidental hero to bankers worldwide with his infamous speech about greed. Director Oliver Stone says that stockbrokers told him that the speech inspired them onto their career path, despite Gekko ultimately ending up in jail for his financial crimes.


MICHAEL DOUGLAS CHARLIE SHEEN DARYL HANNAH
Every dream has a price.
AN OLIVER STONE FILM
WALL STREET

## Do The Right Thing

1989

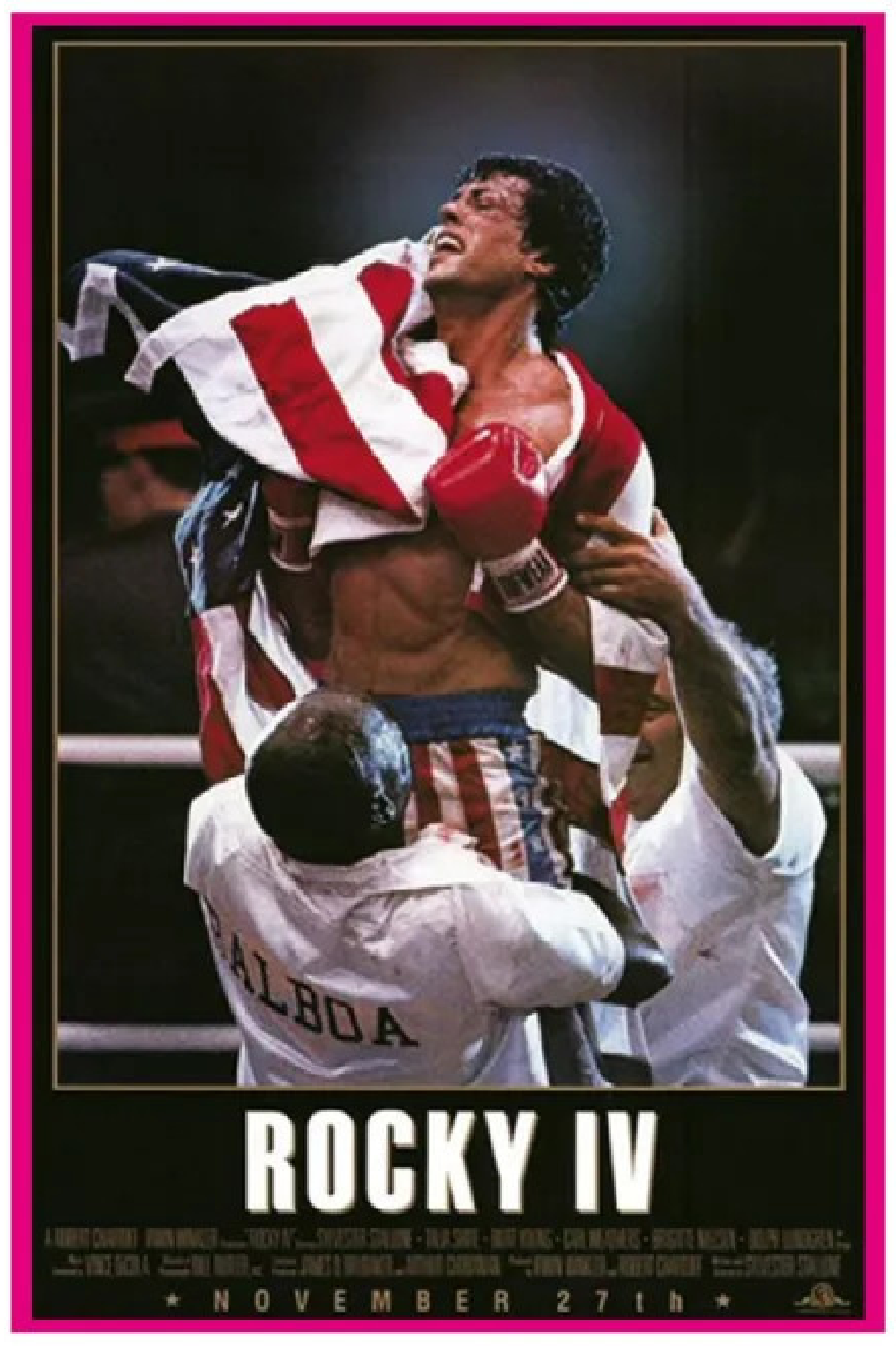
**5** Set on the hottest day of the year in a Brooklyn summer, simmering racial animosity builds in *Do The Right Thing* until the tensions explode into a violent riot. Spike Lee's modern classic held a mirror up to what was happening across the US, and was one of the first major movies to offer a serious look at inner-city race relations.


It's the hottest day of the summer. You can do nothing, you can do something, or you can...
Do The Right Thing
Bed-Stuy
A SPIKE LEE JOINT

## Rocky IV

1985

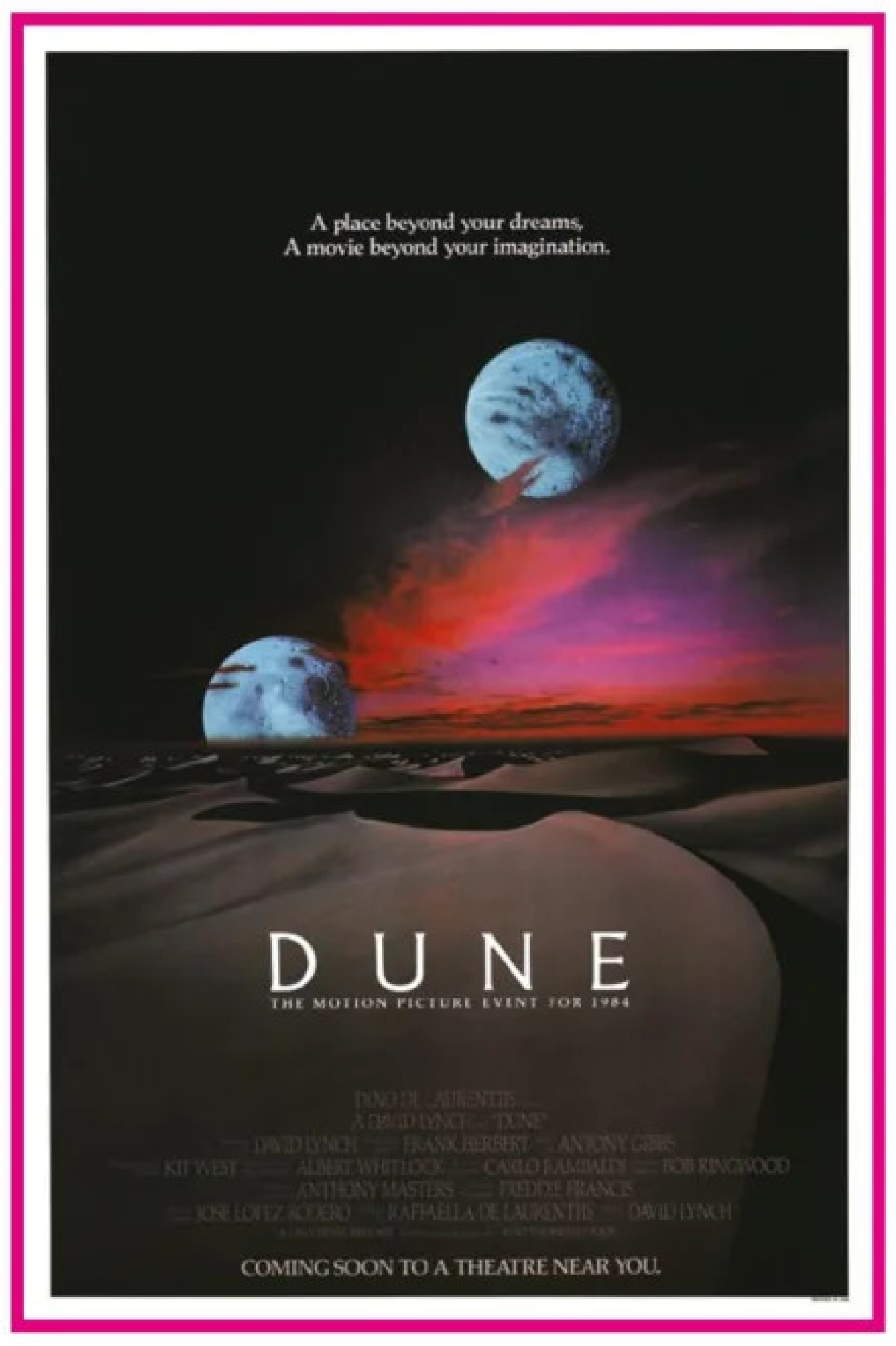
**6** Although it didn't manage to match the moving drama of the original, *Rocky IV* is dripping with '80s cliché. Rocky's bout vs Ivan Drago echoed real-world US vs Soviet Union Cold War tensions, and the movie doubled down on its aesthetic with power rock, training montages and awkward guesses at future technology courtesy of Rocky's robot butlers.

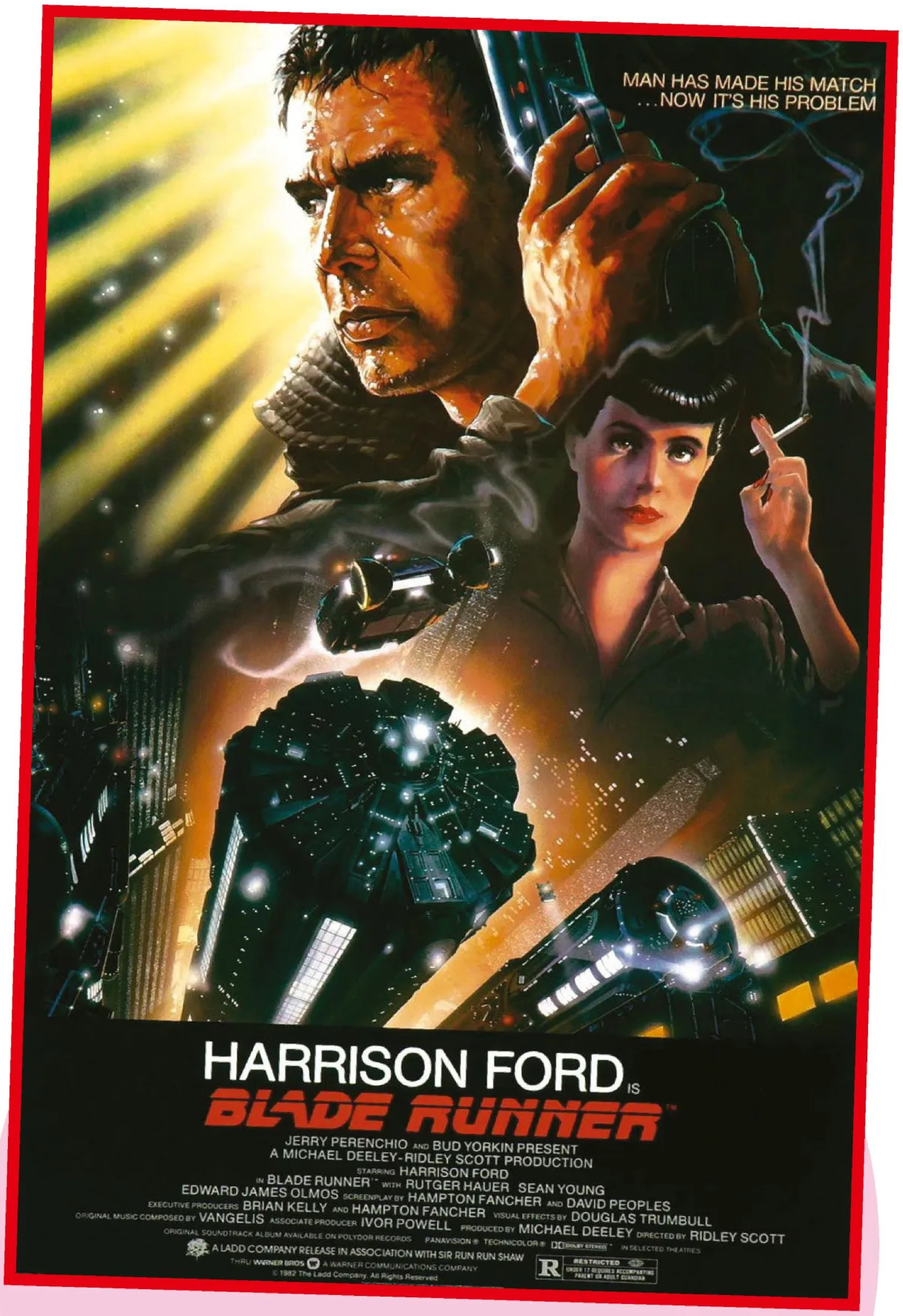

BALBOA
ROCKY IV
NOVEMBER 27th

## Dune

1984

**7** The combination of eye-watering budget, epic ambition, ludicrous plot, soundtrack by Toto and complete lack of self-awareness meant that *Dune* was a film that could only have been made in the '80s. It was released to a mauling by critics, but it's such an utterly bizarre film that the years since have seen it come full circle to be reborn as a cult classic.


A place beyond your dreams. A movie beyond your imagination.
DUNE
THE MOTION PICTURE EVENT FOR 1984
COMING SOON TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU.


MAN HAS MADE HIS MATCH
. . . NOW IT'S HIS PROBLEM
HARRISON FORD IS
BLADE RUNNER
JERRY PERENCHIO AND BUD YORKIN PRESENT
A MICHAEL DEELEY-RIDLEY SCOTT PRODUCTION
STARRING HARRISON FORD
IN BLADE RUNNER WITH RUTGER HAUER SEAN YOUNG
EDWARD JAMES OLMOS SCREENPLAY BY HAMPTON FANCHER AND DAVID PEOPLES
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BRIAN KELLY AND HAMPTON FANCHER VISUAL EFFECTS BY DOUGLAS TRUMBULL
ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY VANGELIS ASSOCIATE PRODUCER IVOR POWELL PRODUCED BY MICHAEL DEELEY DIRECTED BY RIDLEY SCOTT
A LADD COMPANY RELEASE IN ASSOCIATION WITH SIR RUN RUN SHAW
THRU WARNER BROS
R RESTRICTED

## Blade Runner ▲

1982

8 Ridley Scott's neo-noir sci-fi movie is a slow-burner. It limped to poor box-office sales and initial reviews were mixed. But those who saw it loved the smart plot, dark world and ambiguous ending. Word of mouth saw *Blade Runner* re-evaluated and it eventually became one of the most influential sci-fi movies ever made.

## Footloose

1984

11 The '80s didn't lack for movies about dancing, thanks to *Fame, Flashdance* and *Dirty Dancing*. But while those films were kept somewhat grounded by a heavy dose of drama, *Footloose* 'kicked off its Sunday shoes' and had fun. It was more music video than serious movie, thanks to its high energy and light tone.

HE'S A BIG-CITY KID IN A SMALL TOWN.
THEY SAID HE'D NEVER WIN. HE KNEW HE HAD TO.
Footloose

## Who Framed Roger Rabbit

1988

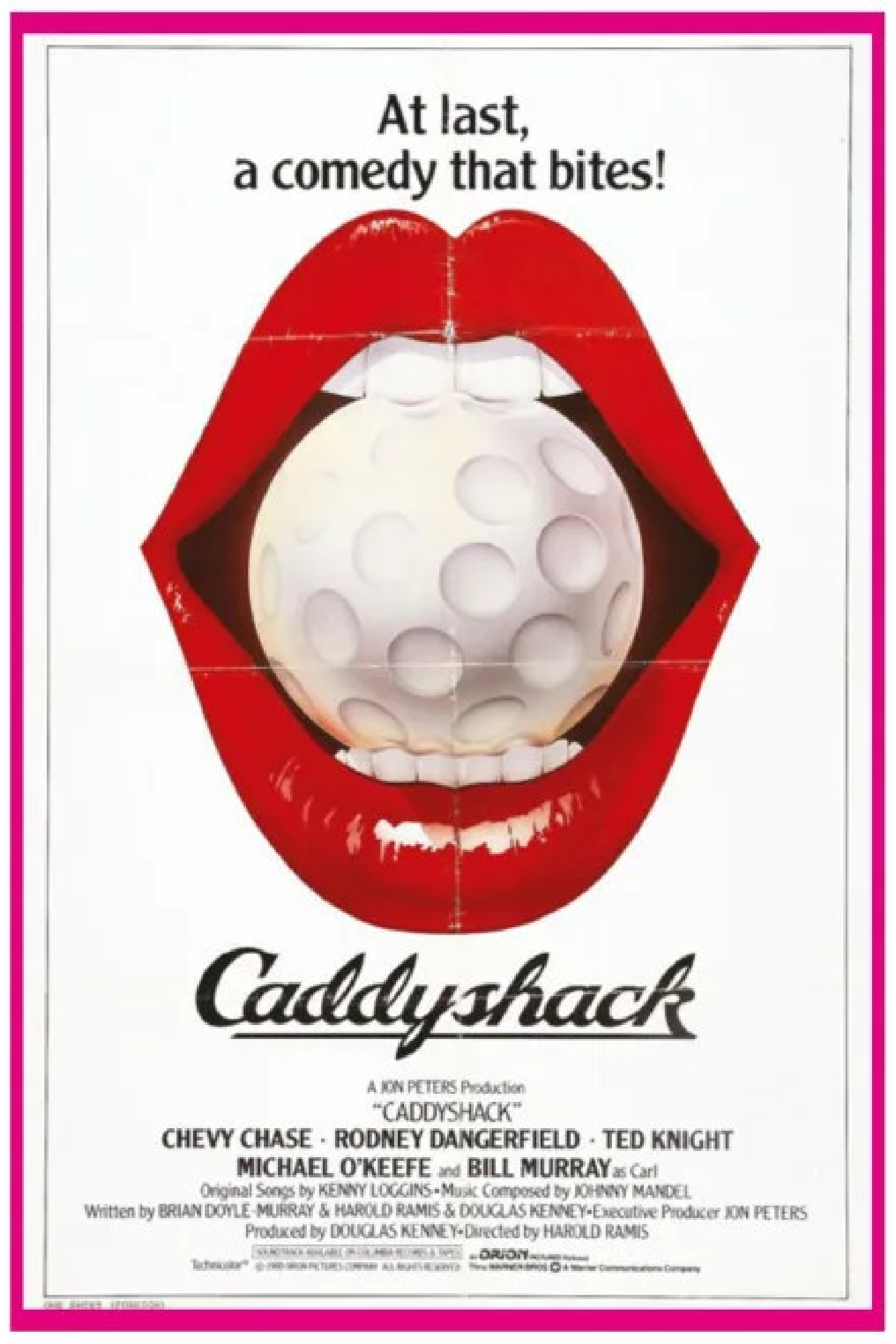
9 The mesmerising mixture of live action and animation had been done before but never like this. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* brought together serious actors (Bob Hoskins, Christopher Lloyd), adult humour, a murder mystery and the wildest bunch of cartoon characters you'll ever meet. There's been nothing quite like it since.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit
It's the story of a man, a woman, and a rabbit in a triangle of trouble.

## Caddyshack

1980

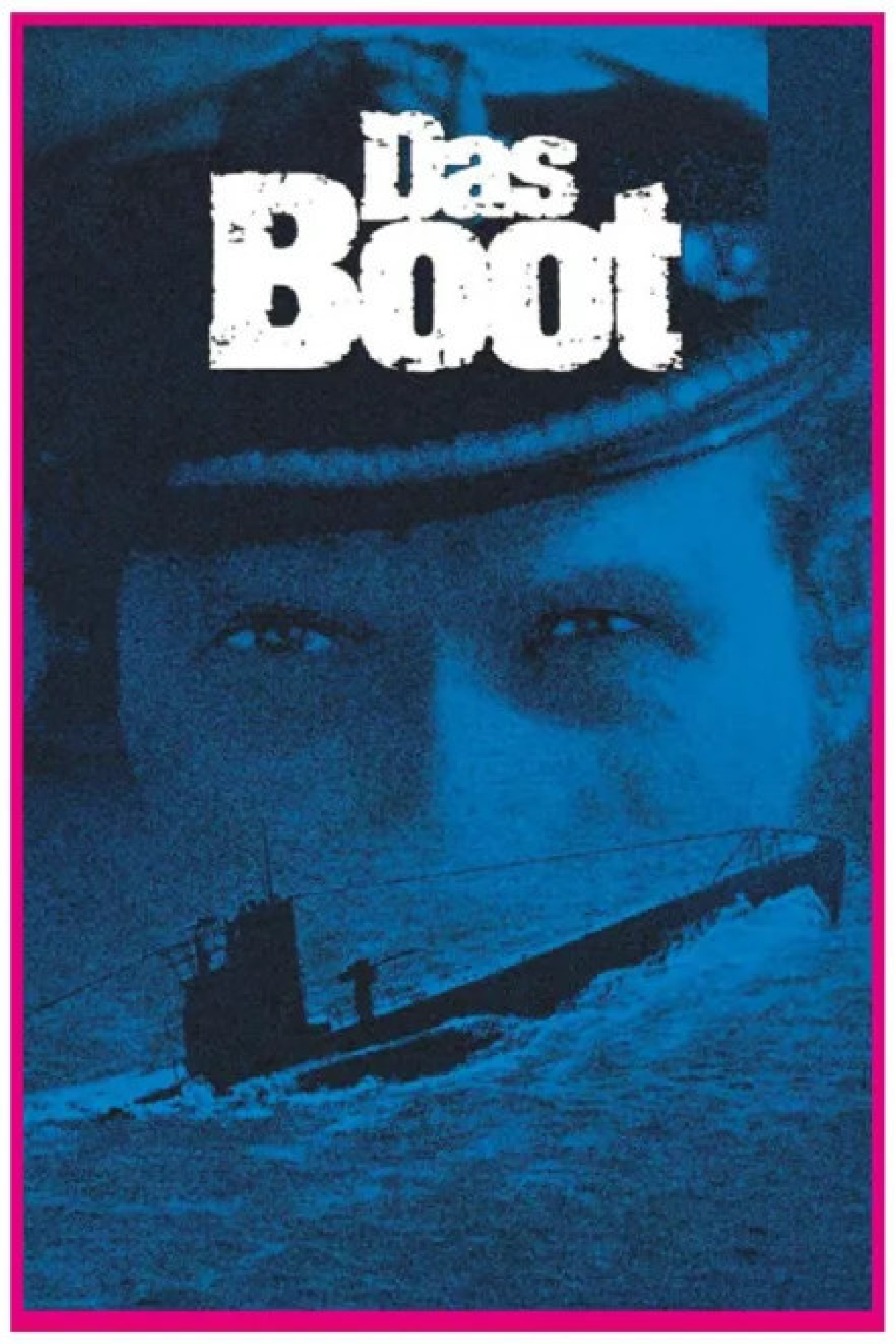
12 A slapstick movie that rockets past at breakneck speed, *Caddyshack* brought together some of the premier names in '80s comedy – Harold Ramis, Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield and Bill Murray. Held together by the loosest of plot threads, *Caddyshack* feels like a couple of hours of the funniest men in the world enjoying themselves, while we get the privilege to watch.


At last,
a comedy that bites!
Caddyshack
CHEVY CHASE · RODNEY DANGERFIELD · TED KNIGHT
MICHAEL O'KEEFE and BILL MURRAY as Carl

## Das Boot

1981

10 Every era has had a foreign-language film that has a huge cultural impact – *Seven Samurai, La Haine* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are just a few standout examples. In the '80s, it was the crushing darkness of German war film *Das Boot*, which offered a claustrophobic look at what a submarine crew had to endure during World War II.



## Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure

1989

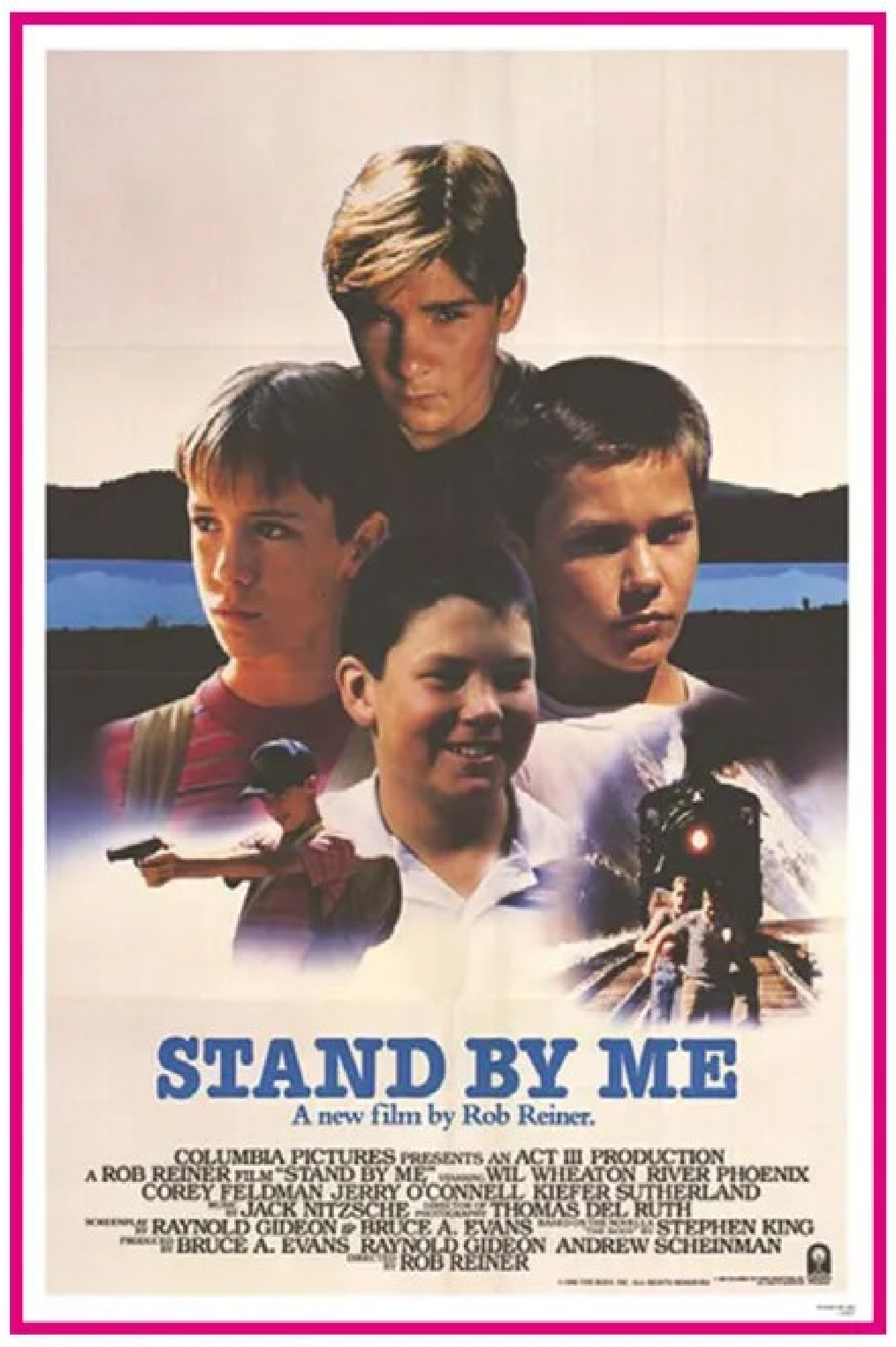
13 This time-travel comedy was also a loving homage to the Californian slacker stereotype of the late '80s. With ripped denim, wild hair, graffiti-splattered garages and gnarly vocab, Bill and Ted might have been dim-witted dudes, but their big hearts proved that it's what's under the surface that counts.

History is about to be rewritten
by two guys who can't spell.
Bill & Ted's
EXCELLENT
adventure
Time flies when you're having fun.

## Stand By Me

1986

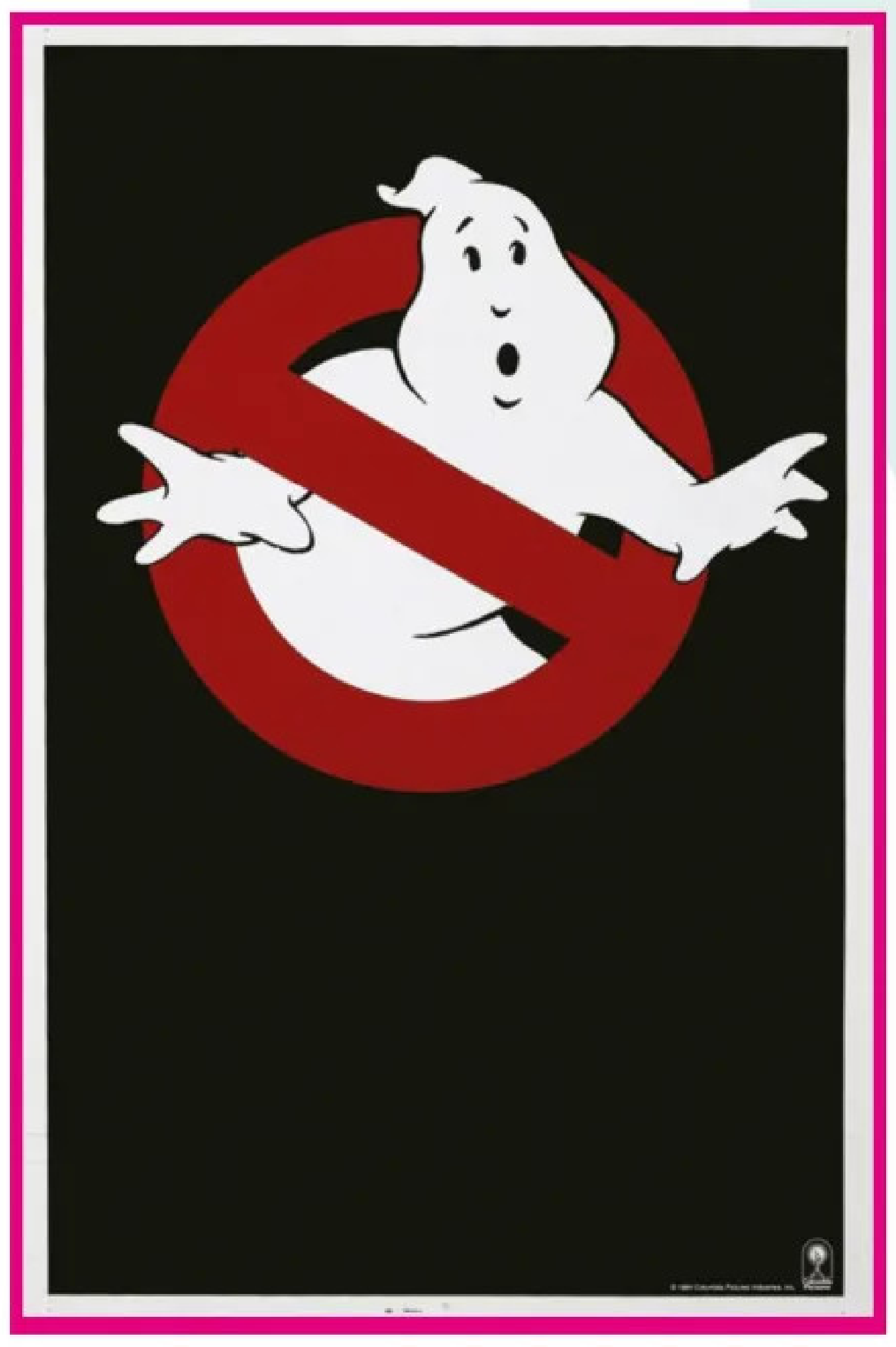
**14** This memorable coming-of-age movie about four friends who set off to find the body of a missing boy resonated with young audiences because we felt like those friends. Angry, geeky, funny, or cool, we could all relate to someone in *Stand By Me*'s quartet. And along we just so happened to learn the meaning of friendship along the way, as they all set off on an impossible adventure.


STAND BY ME
A new film by Rob Reiner.

## Ghostbusters

1984

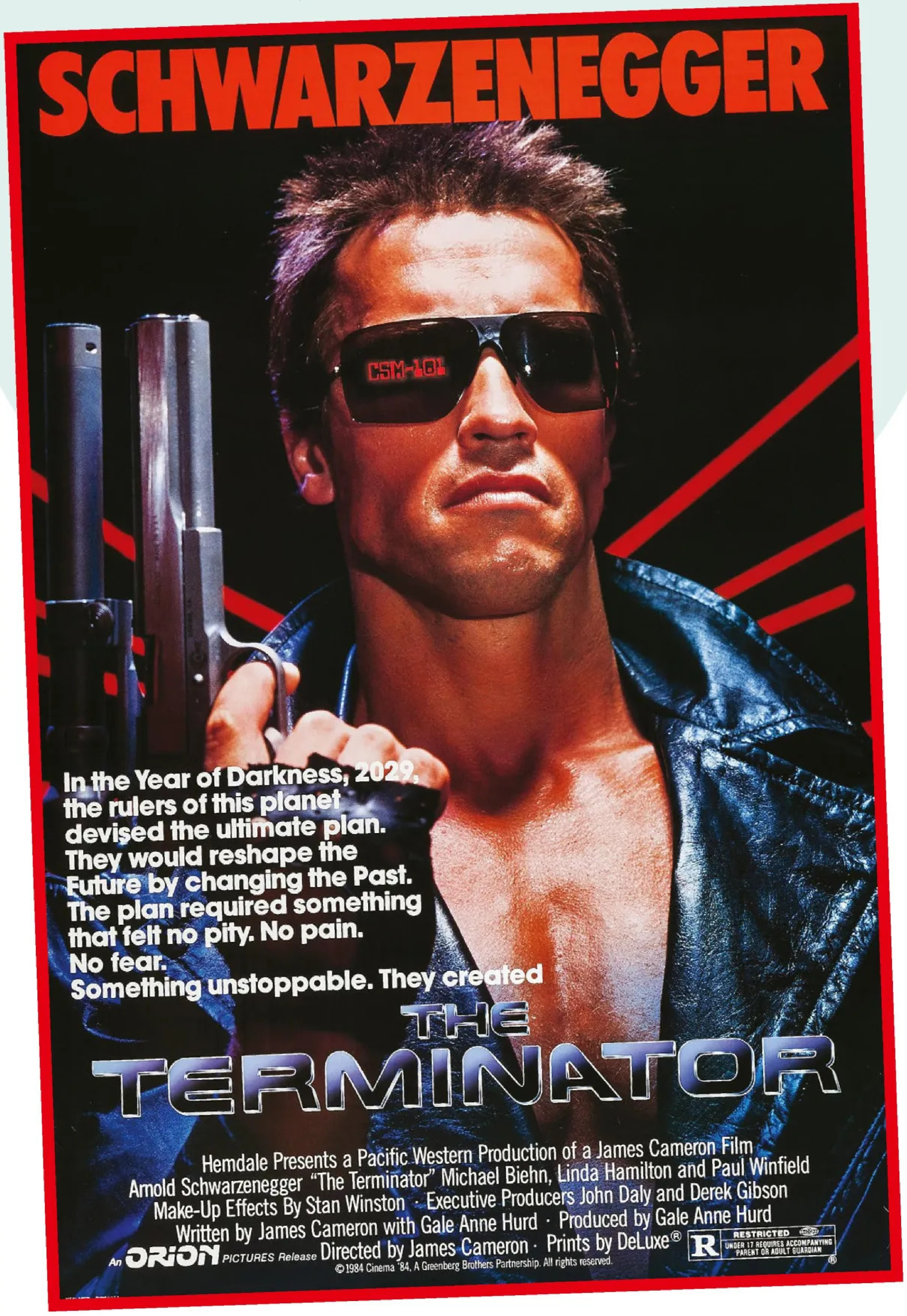
**15** If there's something strange in your neighbourhood, who you gonna call? Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray and the rest of the Ghostbusters, obviously. Unlike most comedies, *Ghostbusters* worked just as well as an action and sci-fi movie, delivering state-of-the-art special effects as the ghostbusting crew save New York from a host of spectacular supernatural threats.



## The Terminator

1984

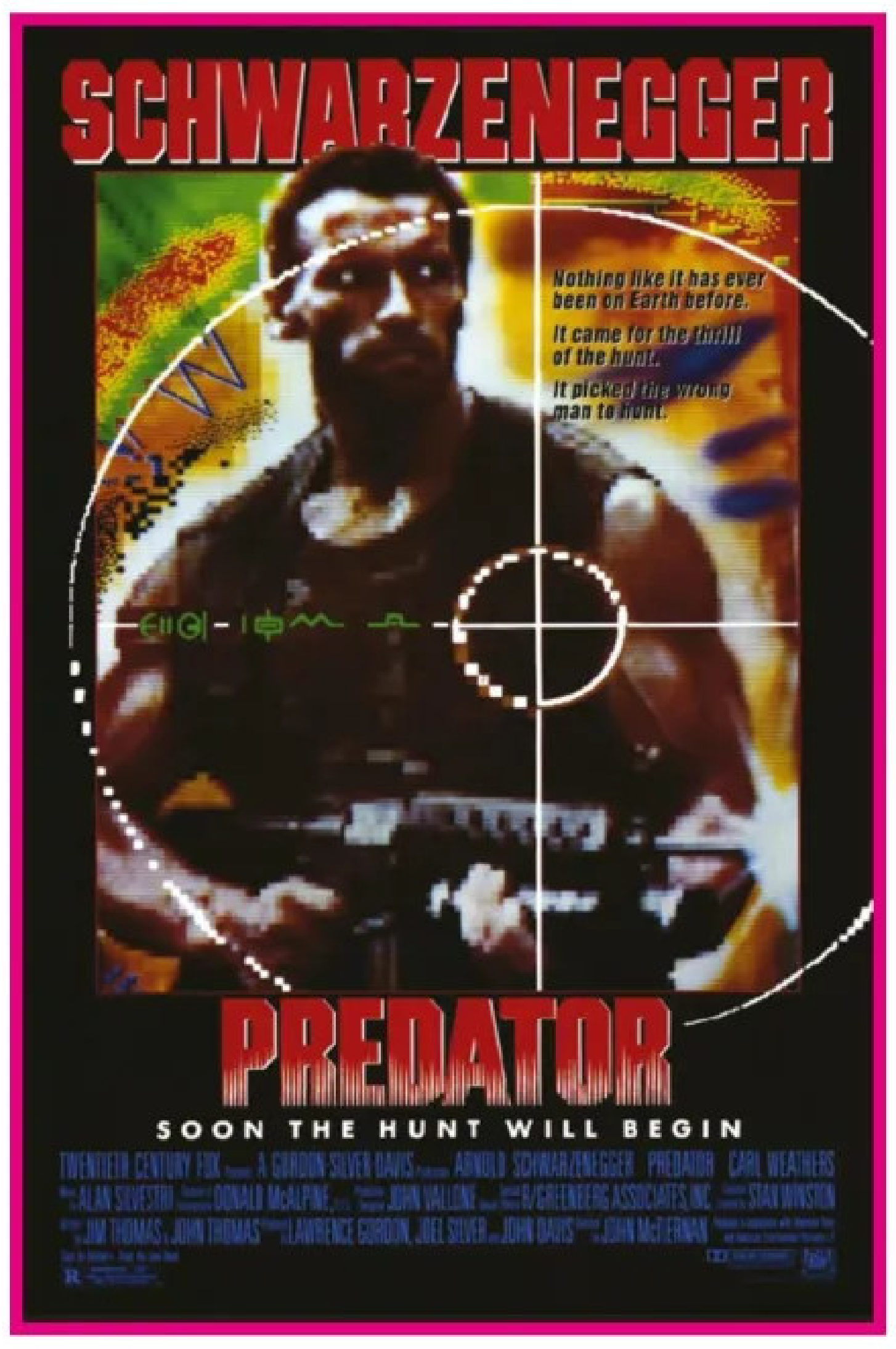
**16** Although the series is known for its sci-fi action today, *The Terminator* was more sci-fi horror, following Sarah Connor's attempts to evade an unstoppable killing machine. Surprisingly, it was also a roller coaster ride through '80s iconography – punk criminals, neon nightclubs, giant phones and Polaroid pictures.


SCHWARZENEGGER
CSM-101
In the Year of Darkness, 2029, the rulers of this planet devised the ultimate plan. They would reshape the Future by changing the Past. The plan required something that felt no pity. No pain. No fear. Something unstoppable. They created
THE TERMINATOR
Hemdale Presents a Pacific Western Production of a James Cameron Film
Arnold Schwarzenegger "The Terminator" Michael Biehn, Linda Hamilton and Paul Winfield
Make-Up Effects By Stan Winston · Executive Producers John Daly and Derek Gibson
Written by James Cameron with Gale Anne Hurd · Produced by Gale Anne Hurd
An ORION PICTURES Release Directed by James Cameron · Prints by DeLuxe®
R RESTRICTED UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN
©1984 Cinema '84, A Greenberg Brothers Partnership. All rights reserved.

## Predator

1987

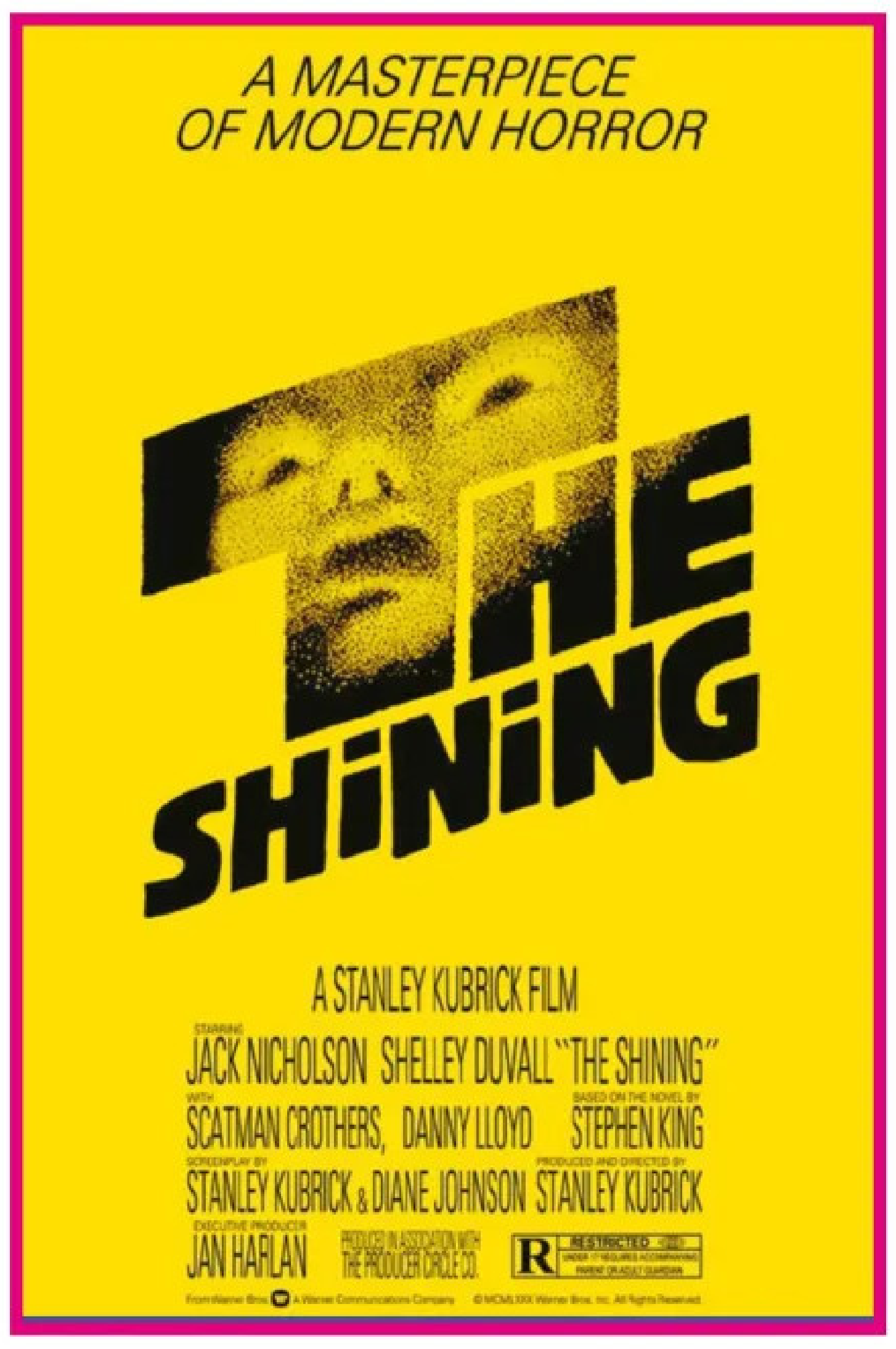
**17** A murderous alien from another world arrives in a hot South American jungle, prompting the CIA to send in their biggest beefcakes to deal with the problem once and for all. Everything in *Predator* screamed excess, from Arnie's bulging biceps to the handheld miniguns to the movie-ending nuke that levels the jungle. Despite a ton of sequels, the original has yet to be topped.


SCHWARZENEGGER
PREDATOR
SOON THE HUNT WILL BEGIN

## The Shining

1980

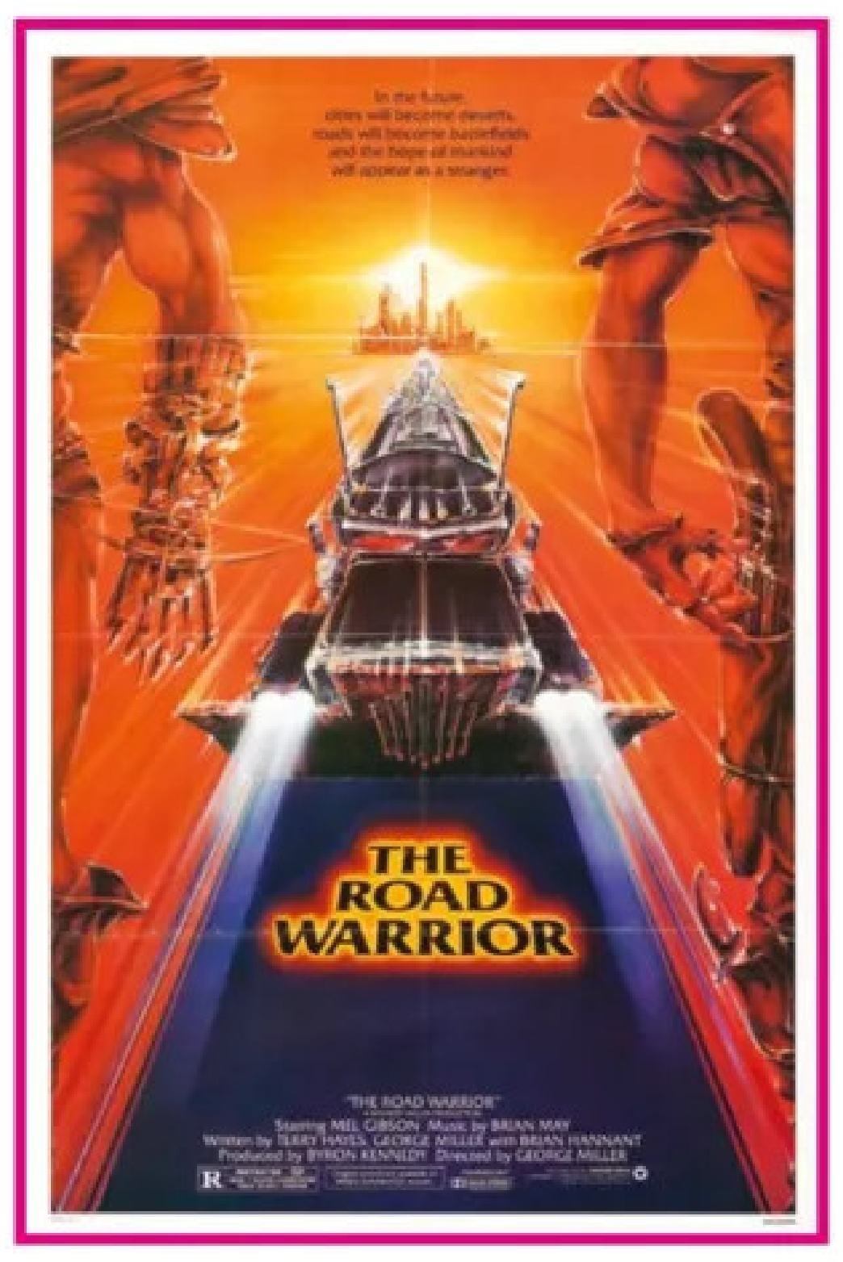
**18** "Heeere's Johnny!" Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Stephen King's psychological horror story focused on the mental breakdown of writer Jack Torrance. His psychological decline in the confines of a strange, remote hotel sees him eventually smashing through a door with an axe, delivering one of the most famous lines in cinema.


A MASTERPIECE OF MODERN HORROR
THE SHINING
A STANLEY KUBRICK FILM
JACK NICHOLSON SHELLEY DUVALL "THE SHINING"
SCATMAN CROTHERS DANNY LLOYD STEPHEN KING
STANLEY KUBRICK & DIANE JOHNSON STANLEY KUBRICK
JAN HARLAN

## Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior

1981

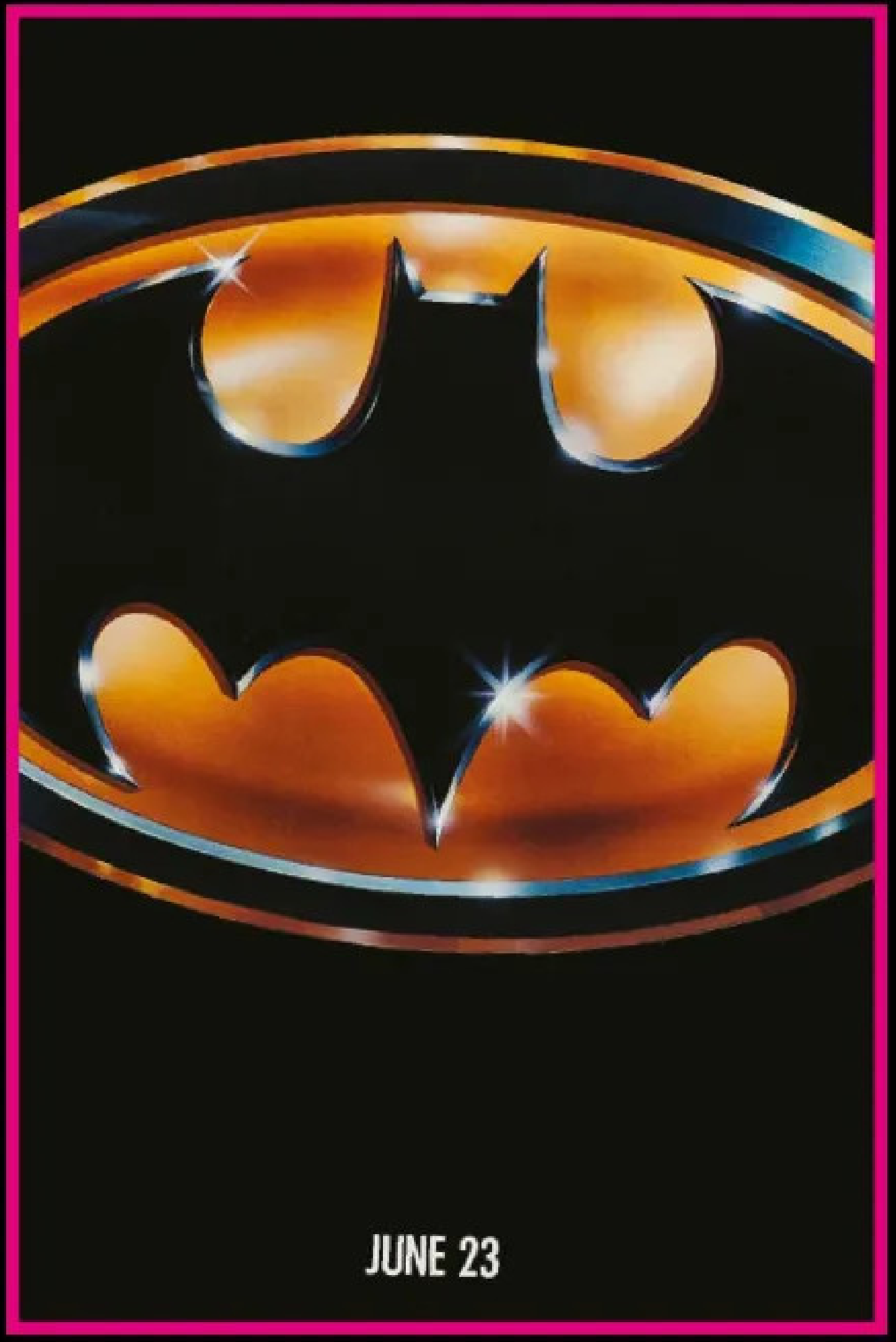
**19** Upping the ante from the original outing, *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* was striking for both its action and its look. The combination of post-apocalyptic wasteland and '80s punk style saw a host of B-movies soon follow in its wake, from *Warrior of the Lost World* to *Wheels on Fire*.


THE ROAD WARRIOR

## Batman

1989

**20** *Batman* wasn't the first superhero movie, but there's no doubt it was one of the most influential. Unlike the late Adam West's brightly coloured Batman outing in 1966, Tim Burton's take on the caped crusader was dark and mysterious, setting the brooding template for superhero movies that's still being followed to this day by the likes of Zack Snyder.



## Akira

1989

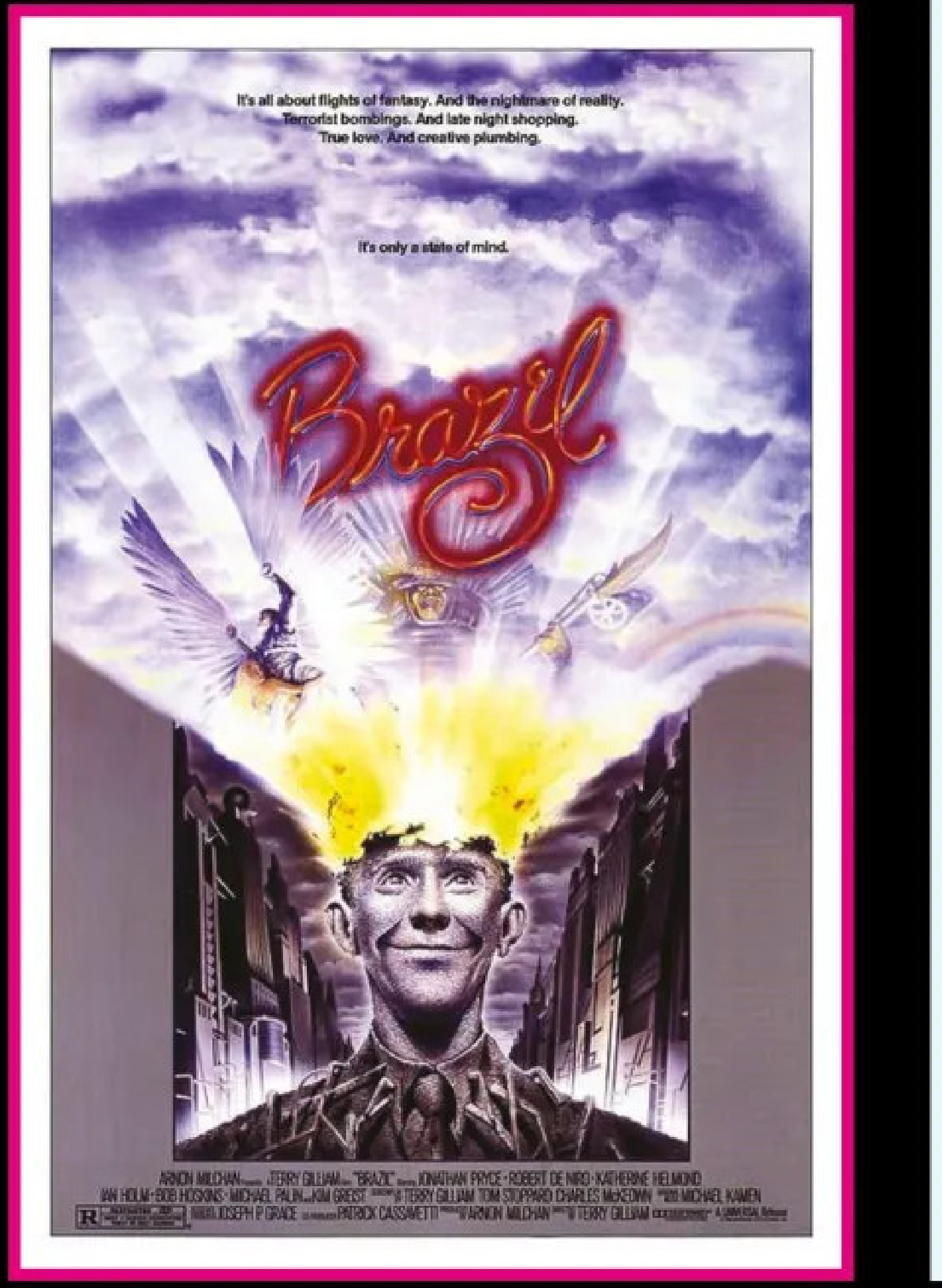
**21** One of the most important films of the '80s, *Akira* was the first anime to gain global recognition. The plot was nearly incomprehensible, but there was no denying the quality of the animation or the eye-catching images throughout, paving the way for *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ninja Scroll* to follow in its footsteps.

PIONEER ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS
AKIRA
アキラ
THE END OF THE WORLD WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING.
www.akira2001.com

## Brazil

1985

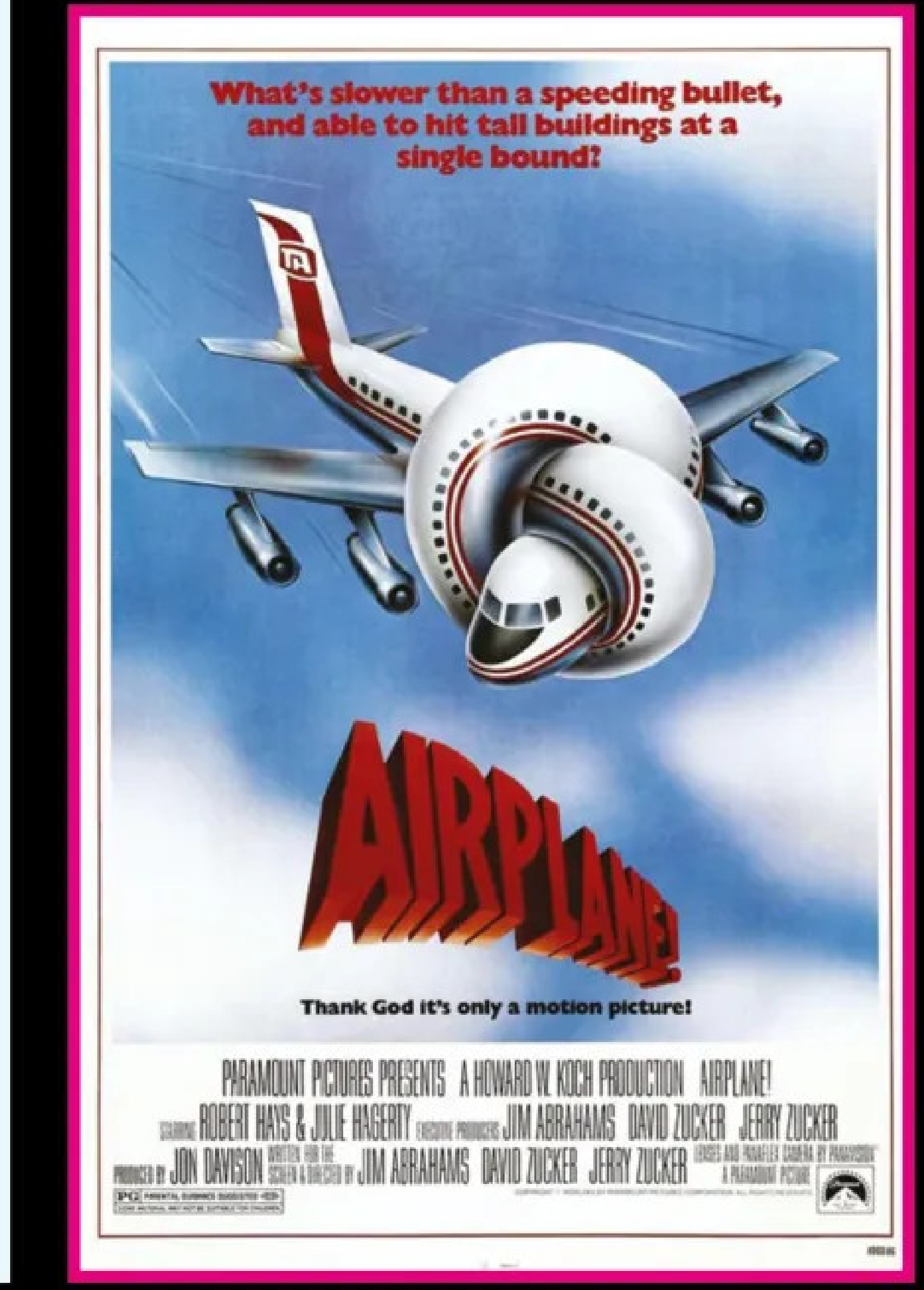
**22** Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* was bleak, surreal, funny and cruel. The plight of its hero Sam Lowry cut through the middle-management paperwork culture that was beginning to seep into everyday life, while combining it with one of the most restlessly creative worlds ever made. It also managed to turn the loveable Michael Palin into a politely smiling monster.

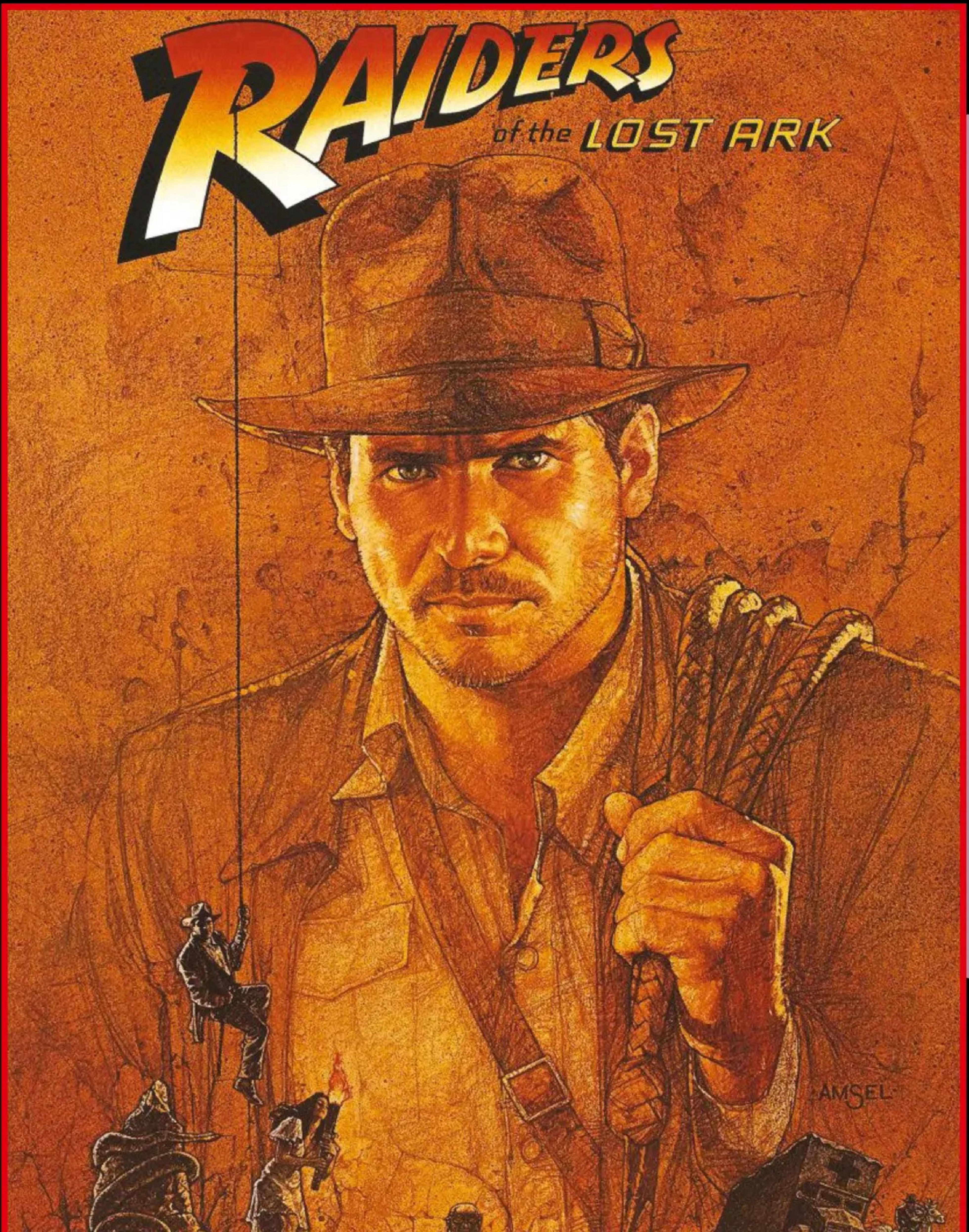

It's all about flights of fantasy. And the nightmare of reality.
Terrorist bombings. And late night shopping.
True love. And creative plumbing.
It's only a state of mind.
Brazil

## Airplane

1980

**23** "Have you ever seen a grown man naked?" *Airplane* was the comedy that was proud to be a comedy, knowing full well that there was no joke too juvenile or too silly to make the cut. Its infectious enthusiasm and quick-fire gags became a hallmark of comedy at the time, and which would later be seen in films like *Spaceballs*.


What's slower than a speeding bullet, and able to hit tall buildings at a single bound?
AIRPLANE!
Thank God it's only a motion picture!
PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS A HOWARD W. KOCH PRODUCTION AIRPLANE!
ROBERT HAYS & JULIE HAGERTY
JIM ABRAHAMS DAVID ZUCKER JERRY ZUCKER


RAIDERS of the LOST ARK
AMSEL

## Raiders of the Lost Ark

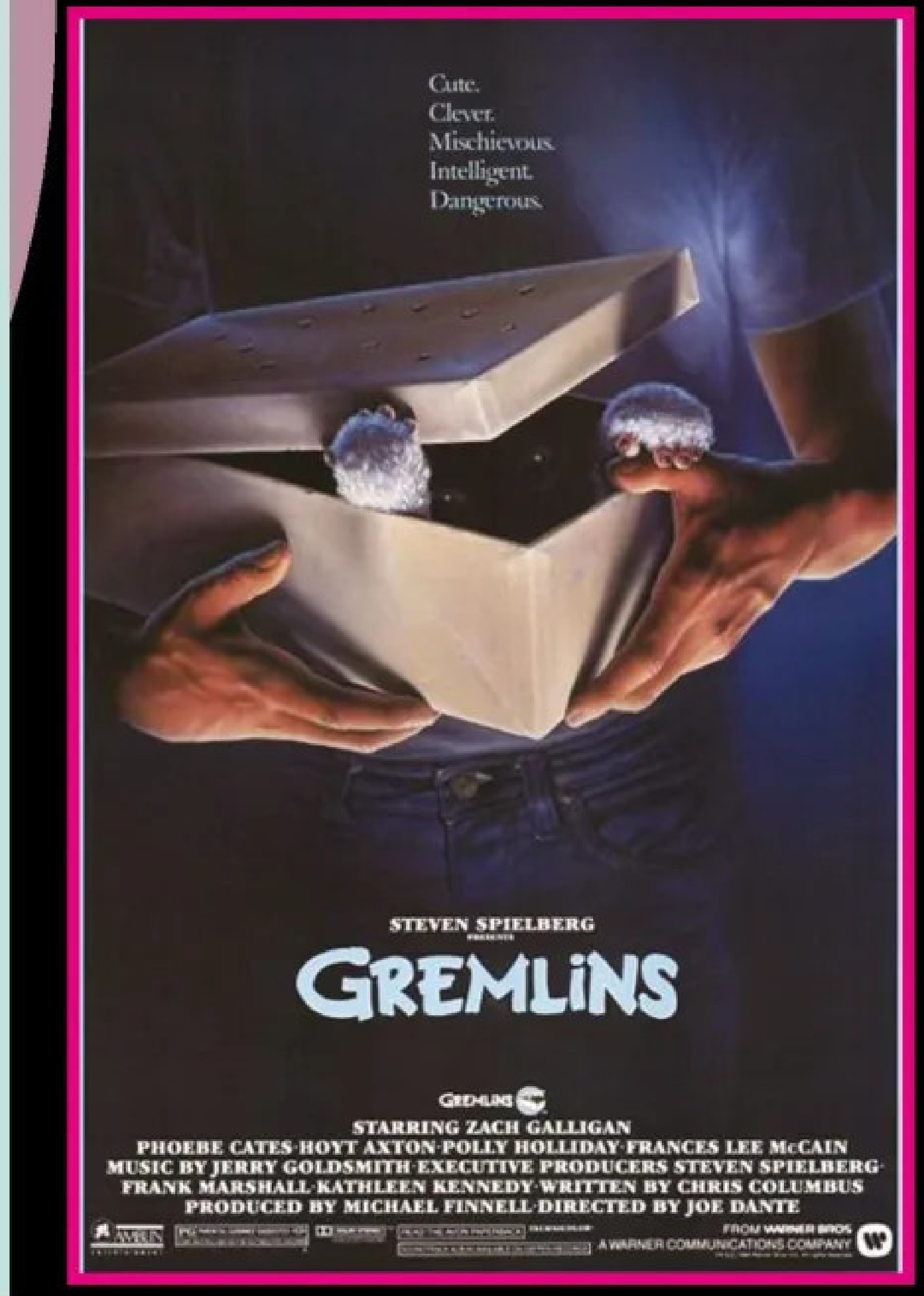
1981

**24** The biggest adventurer of the '80s was Indiana Jones. Harrison Ford was perfect as the wise-cracking, whip-cracking, skull-cracking hero, adding just enough vulnerability to Indy that we all wanted to cheer for him. This first adventure, which pitted Indiana Jones against the Nazis, remains one of the greatest films of all time.

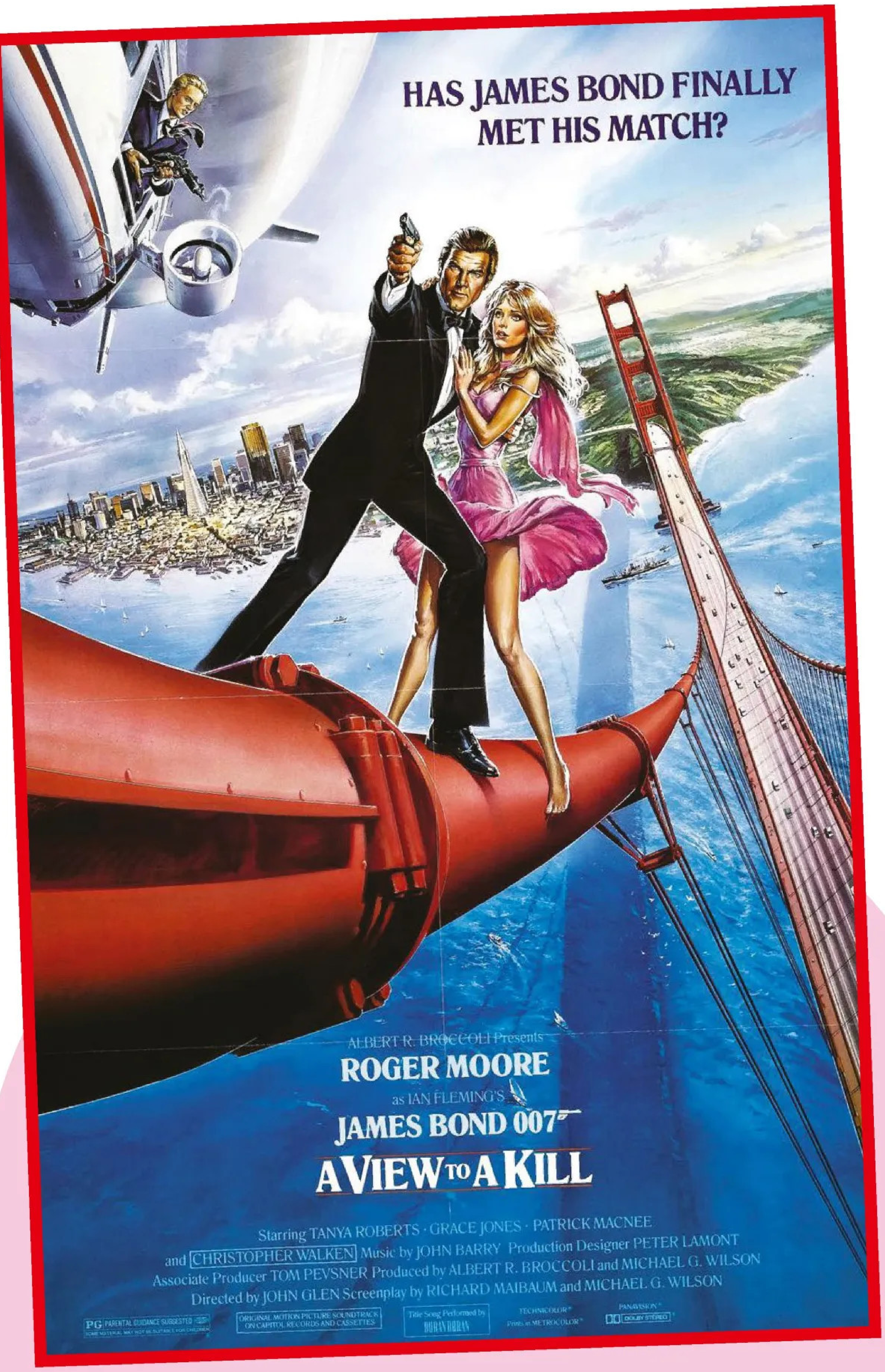
## Gremlins

1984

**25** Don't expose them to bright light. Don't get them wet. And whatever you do, don't feed them after midnight. These three rules became legendary in the wake of Gremlins' success, as director Joe Dante and executive producer Steven Spielberg turned a family-friendly movie on its head by introducing the deadly and ravenous little monsters halfway through the film.


Cute.
Clever.
Mischievous.
Intelligent.
Dangerous.
STEVEN SPIELBERG PRESENTS
GREMLINS
STARRING ZACH GALLIGAN

> ***"A fitting finale for a man who injected the most humour into the James Bond franchise"***


HAS JAMES BOND FINALLY MET HIS MATCH?
ALBERT R. BROCCOLI Presents
ROGER MOORE
as IAN FLEMING'S
JAMES BOND 007
A VIEW TO A KILL
Starring TANYA ROBERTS · GRACE JONES · PATRICK MACNEE
and CHRISTOPHER WALKEN Music by JOHN BARRY Production Designer PETER LAMONT
Associate Producer TOM PEVSNER Produced by ALBERT R. BROCCOLI and MICHAEL G. WILSON
Directed by JOHN GLEN Screenplay by RICHARD MAIBAUM and MICHAEL G. WILSON

## A View To A Kill ▲

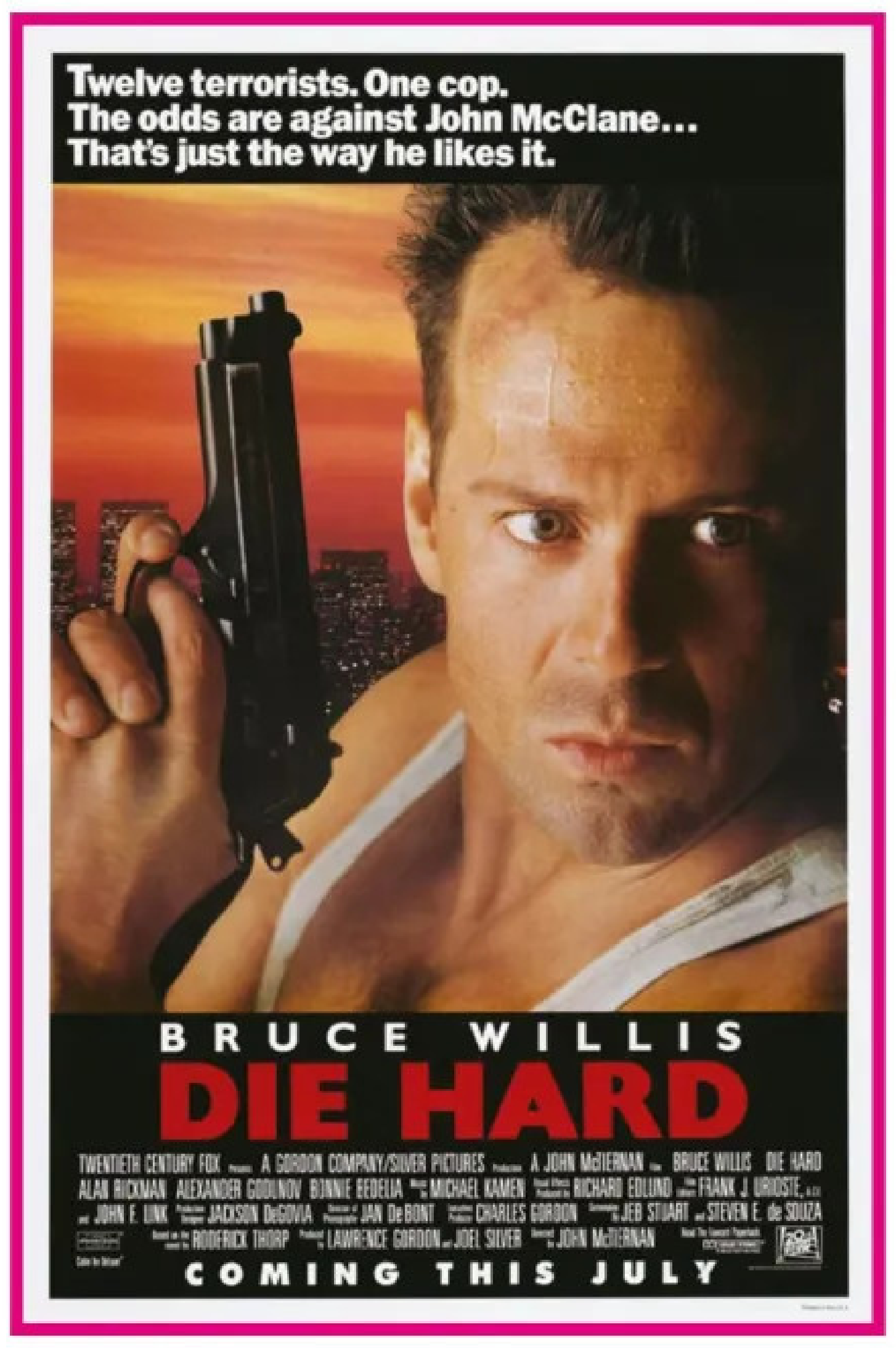
1985

**26** The late Roger Moore's final Bond outing was his most ridiculous, and starts with him investigating racehorses and ends with him battling Christopher Walken's Zorin on an airship floating over the Golden Gate Bridge. It was a fitting finale for a man who injected the most humour into the James Bond franchise.

## Die Hard

1988

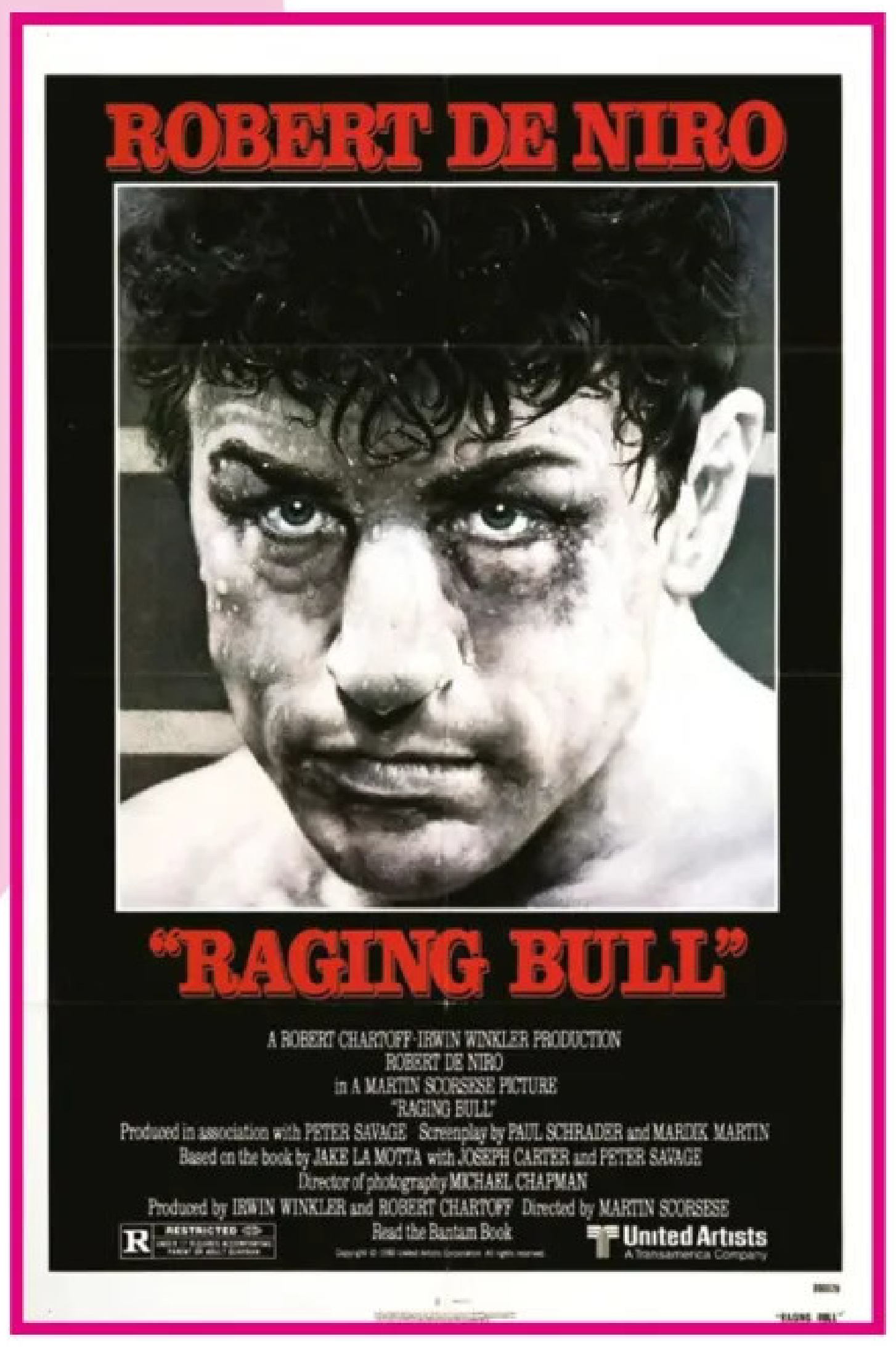
**27** *Die Hard* might be notorious nowadays for being the centre of annual is-it-a-Christmas-movie borefest arguments but regardless of your stance, it's still one of the greatest action films of all time. It did this by making Bruce Willis relatable as John McClane, a normal cop who just so happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.


Twelve terrorists. One cop.
The odds are against John McClane...
That's just the way he likes it.
BRUCE WILLIS
DIE HARD
COMING THIS JULY

## Raging Bull

1980

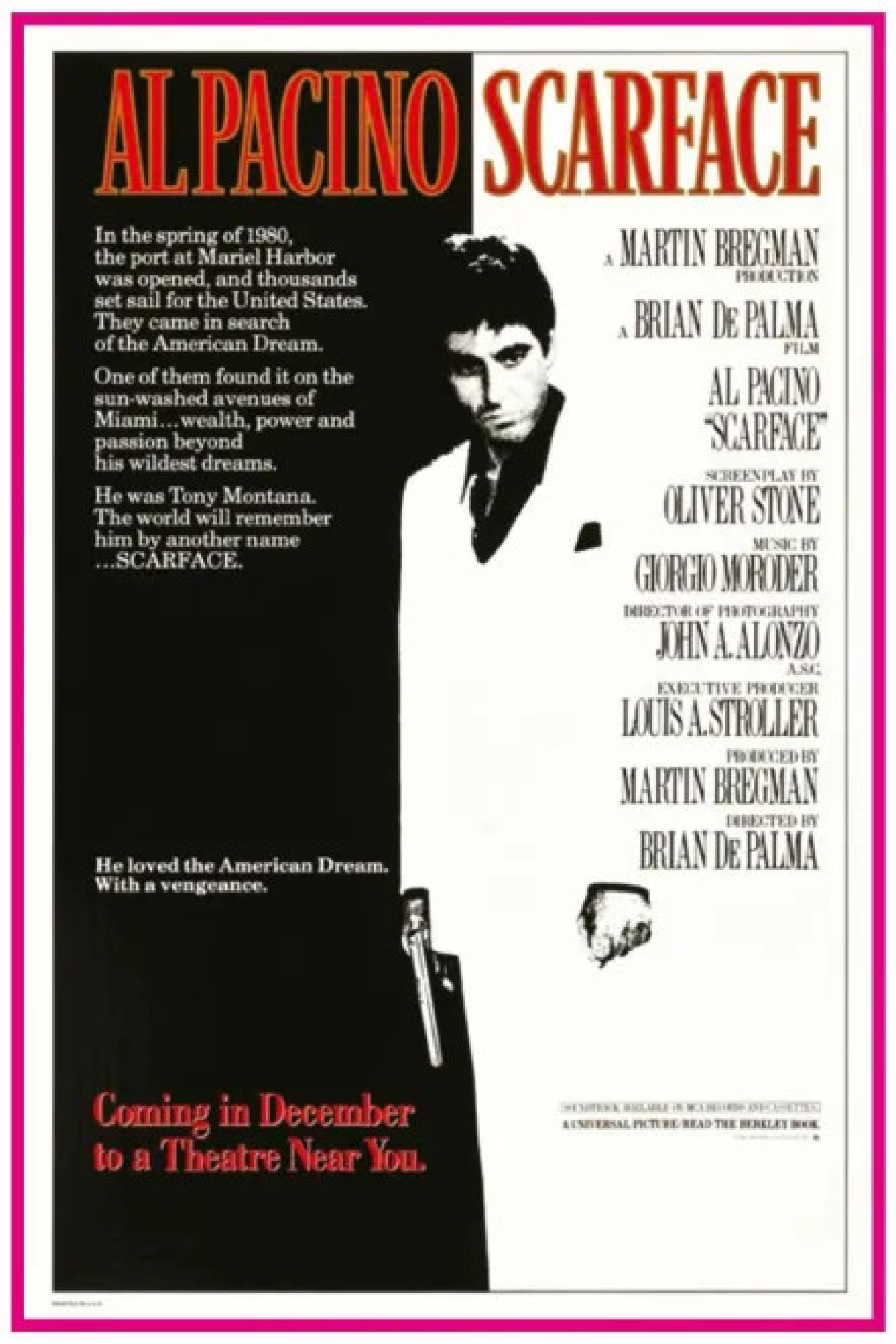
**29** As Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier's illustrious careers were drawing to a close, Martin Scorsese teamed up with frequent collaborator Robert De Niro for *Raging Bull*, the story of former World Middleweight champion Jake LaMotta's life. The explosive drama and powerful acting made for one of the greatest films ever made, and cemented De Niro as one of the premier leading men of his generation.


ROBERT DE NIRO
"RAGING BULL"

## Scarface

1983

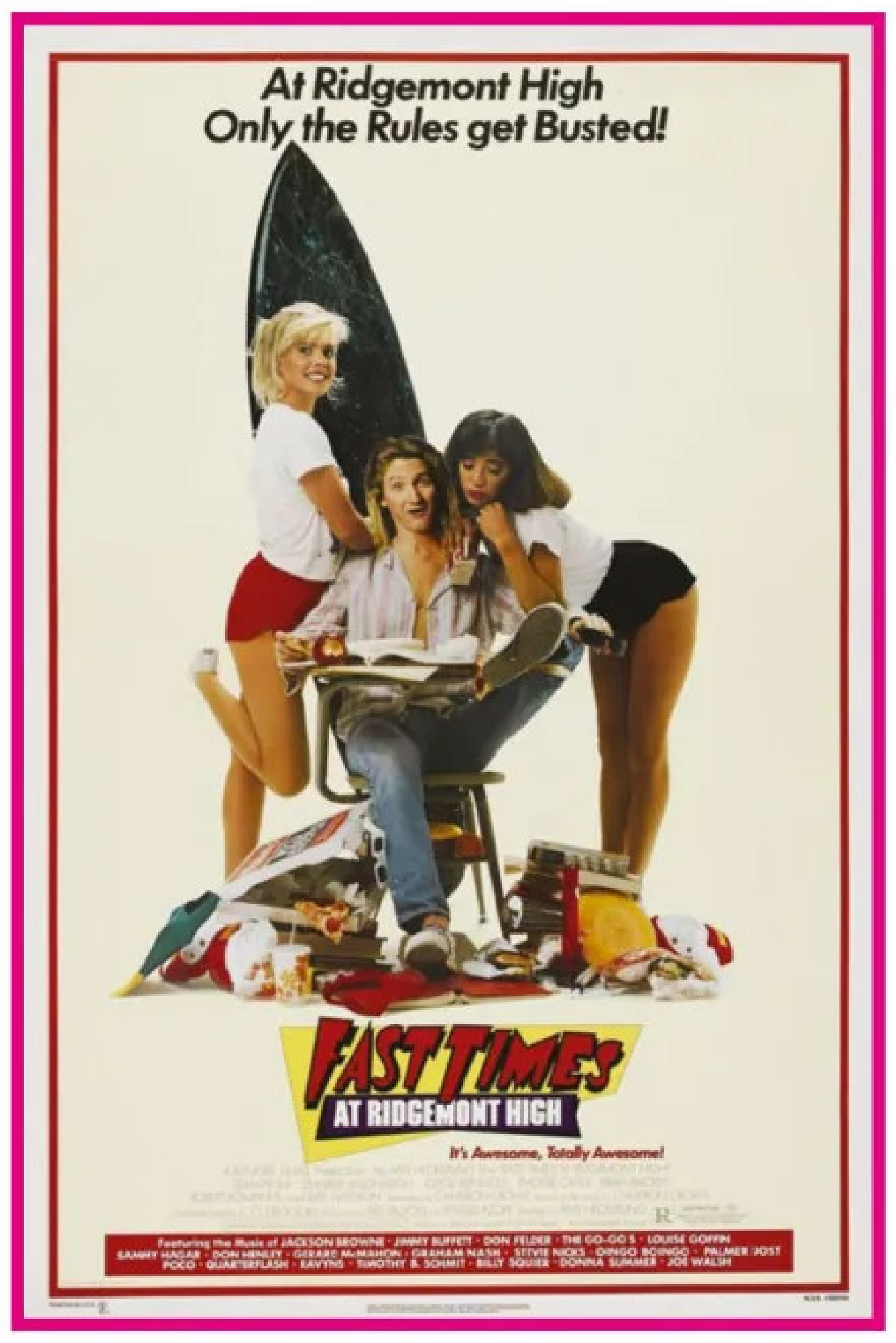
**28** No film captures the vibe of '80s Miami like *Scarface* does – the crime, the glamour, the immigrants, the drugs. At the heart of it all is the scowling menace of Al Pacino as Cuban thug-turned cocaine kingpin Tony Montana. His rapid rise is only matched by his dramatic fall, with "say hello to my little friend!" now permanently etched in pop culture.


AL PACINO SCARFACE
In the spring of 1980, the port at Mariel Harbor was opened, and thousands set sail for the United States. They came in search of the American Dream.
One of them found it on the sun-washed avenues of Miami...wealth, power and passion beyond his wildest dreams.
He was Tony Montana. The world will remember him by another name ...SCARFACE.
He loved the American Dream. With a vengeance.
Coming in December to a Theatre Near You.
MARTIN BREGMAN
BRIAN De PALMA
AL PACINO
"SCARFACE"
OLIVER STONE
GIORGIO MORODER
JOHN A. ALONZO
LOUIS A. STROLLER
MARTIN BREGMAN
BRIAN De PALMA

## Fast Times at Ridgemont High

1982

**30** Without wanting to put too fine a point on it, teenage boys are the audience that are most likely to remember *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. In a film stuffed with lewd humour and memorable scenes, it was actress Phoebe Cates who stole the show, when she emerged from a swimming pool and stunned viewers by dropping her bikini.

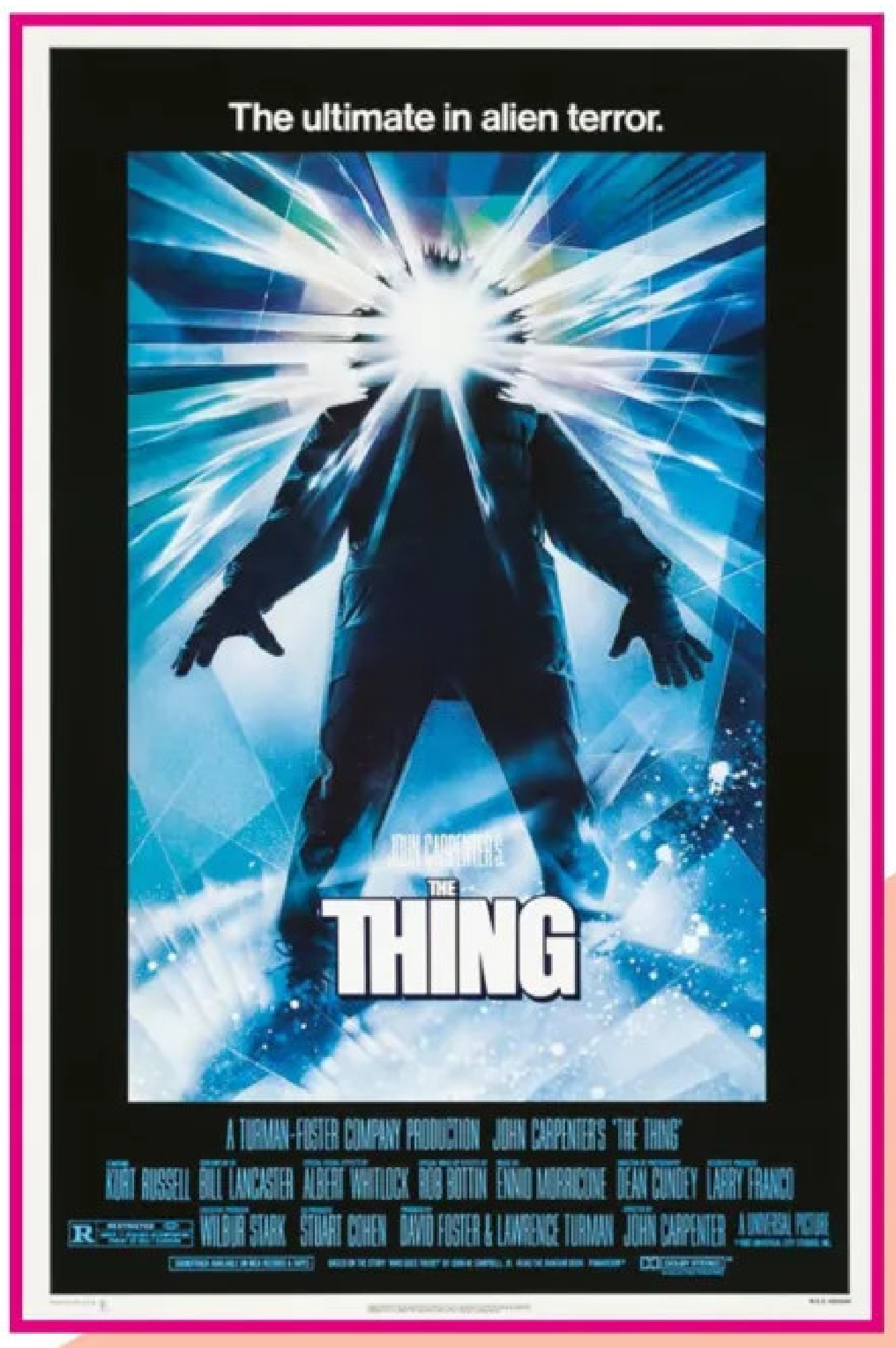

At Ridgemont High
Only the Rules get Busted!
FAST TIMES
AT RIDGEMONT HIGH
It's Awesome, Totally Awesome!

## The Thing

1982

**31**

From the freezing outpost to the cold synths of the soundtrack, the icy horror of *The Thing* felt unrelentingly desolate and bleak. Not only was John Carpenter's *The Thing* a smart psychological horror, but among the snowstorms was a blizzard of practical special effects that made even seasoned horror fans watch the unfolding horror through their fingers.

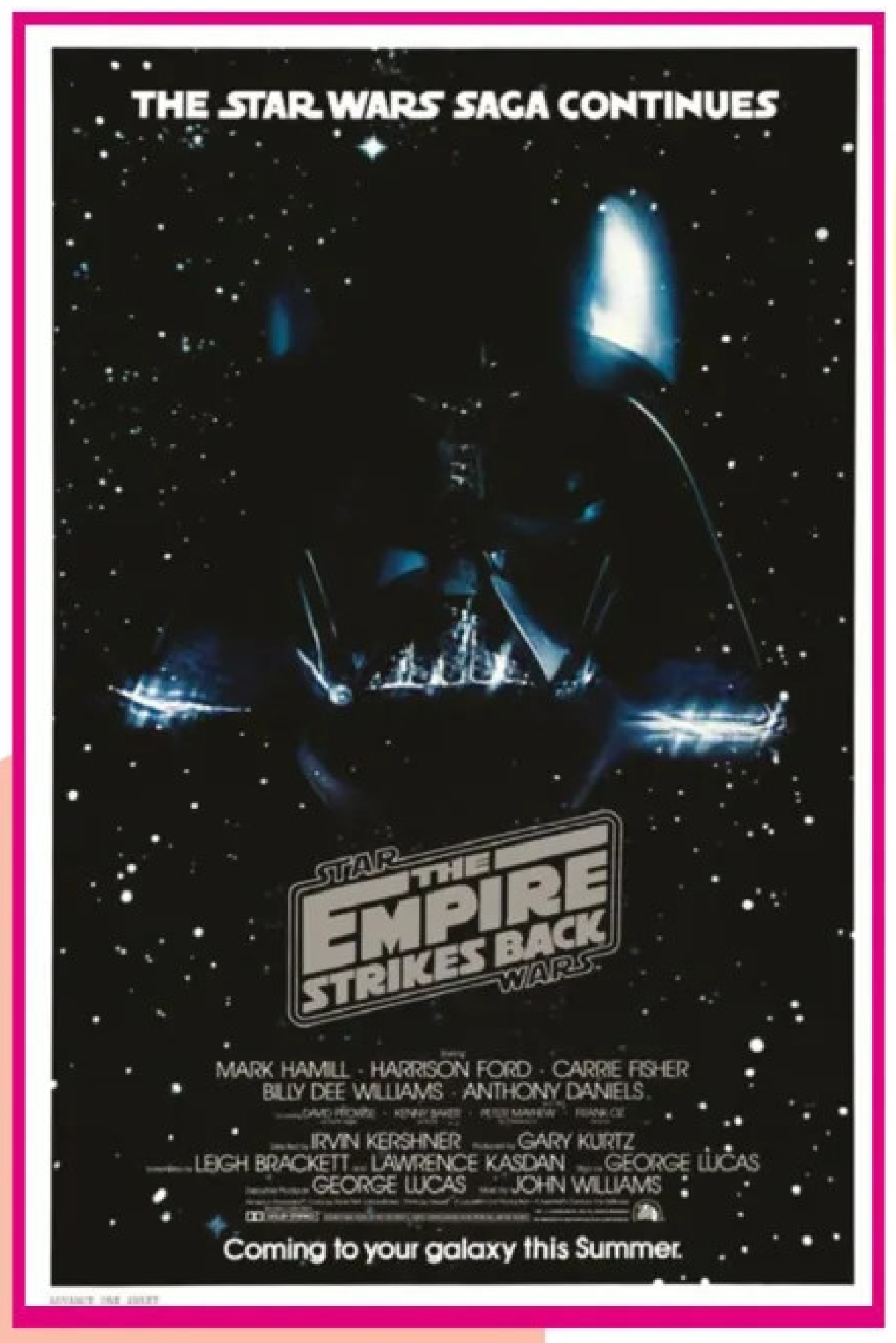

The ultimate in alien terror.
THE THING

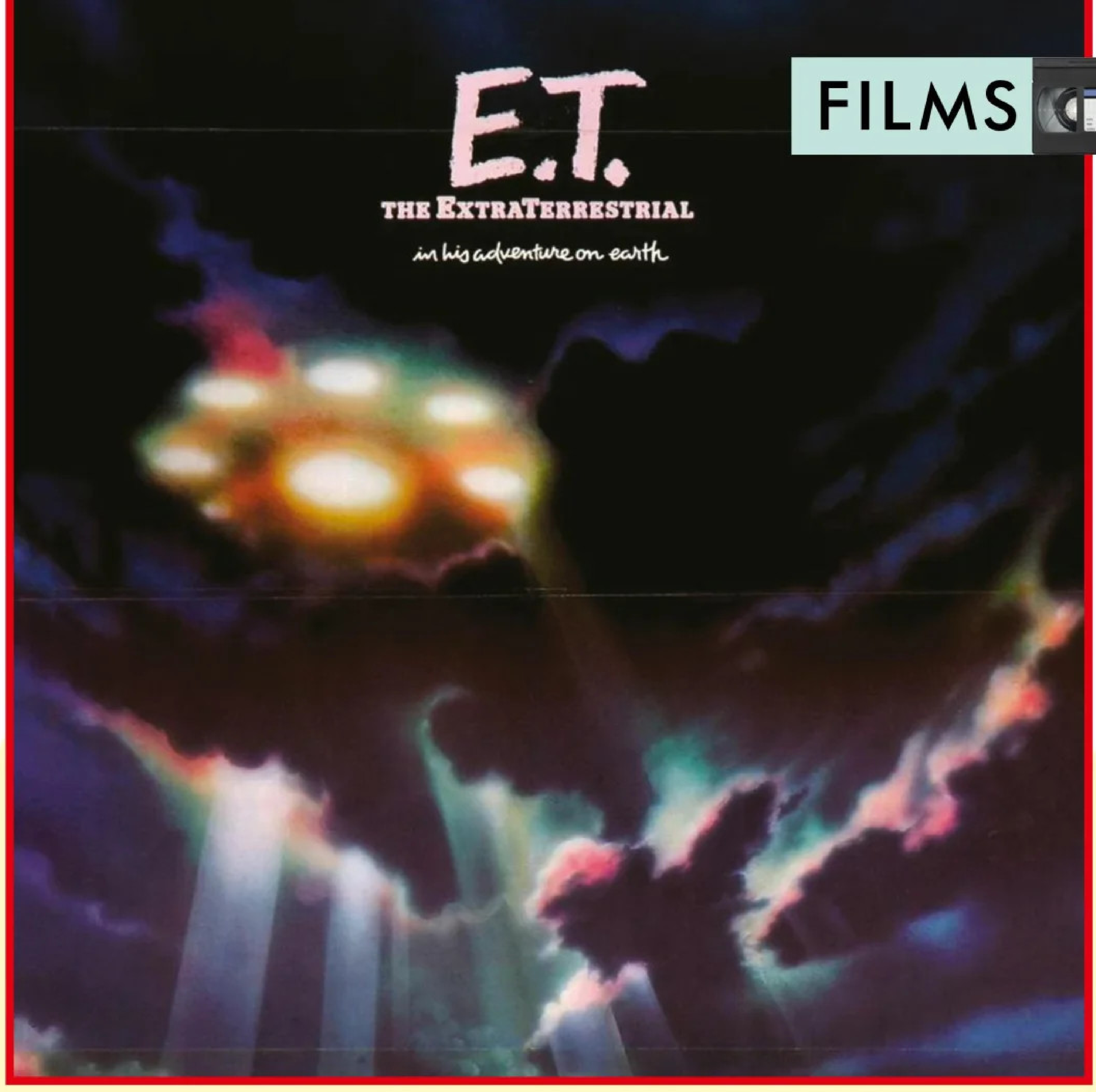
## Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back

1980

**32**

After the culture-defining space opera of *Star Wars*, the pressure was on for the sequel to deliver. It did. With lines like "Never tell me the odds", the introduction of Yoda, and Darth Vader revealing a shocking secret, *The Empire Strikes Back* was every bit as memorable.


THE STAR WARS SAGA CONTINUES
STAR WARS THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
Coming to your galaxy this Summer.


E.T.
THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL
in his adventure on earth

## ▲ E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

1982

**33**

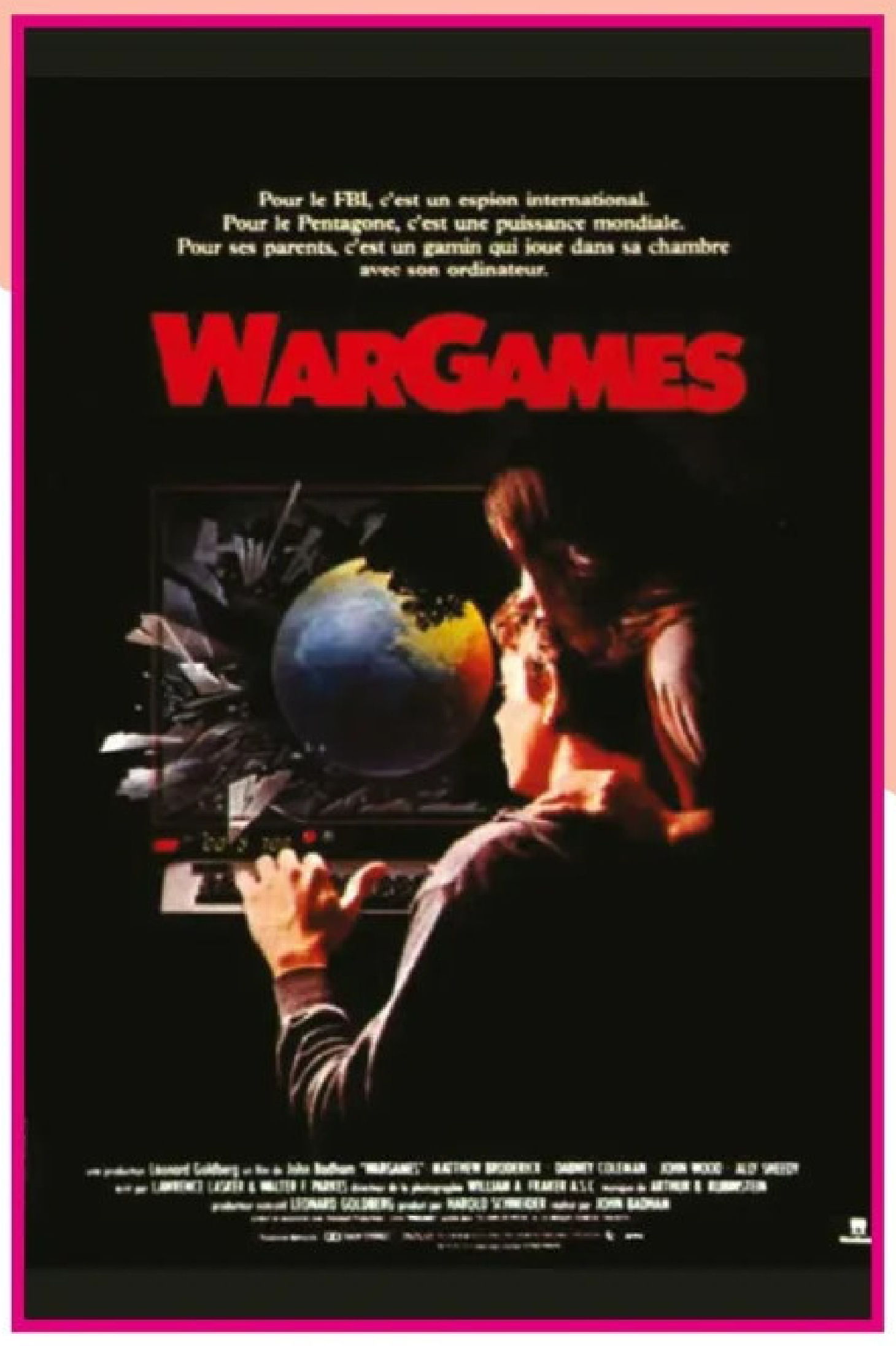
Steven Spielberg had already proven his directing skills with *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. But he saved his best for *E.T.*, a mix of sci-fi and fantasy that almost invented the summer family blockbuster. *E.T.* became the highest-grossing film of all time, a record held until 1993's *Jurassic Park* – another Spielberg classic.

## WarGames

1983

**34**

Developed in response to the Cold War threat of nuclear war, *WarGames* has been referenced again and again over the years whenever global conflict looms. In particular, its famous "the only winning move is not to play" seems as relevant today as it did back then. Not bad for a film about a high school student hacking into a military supercomputer…

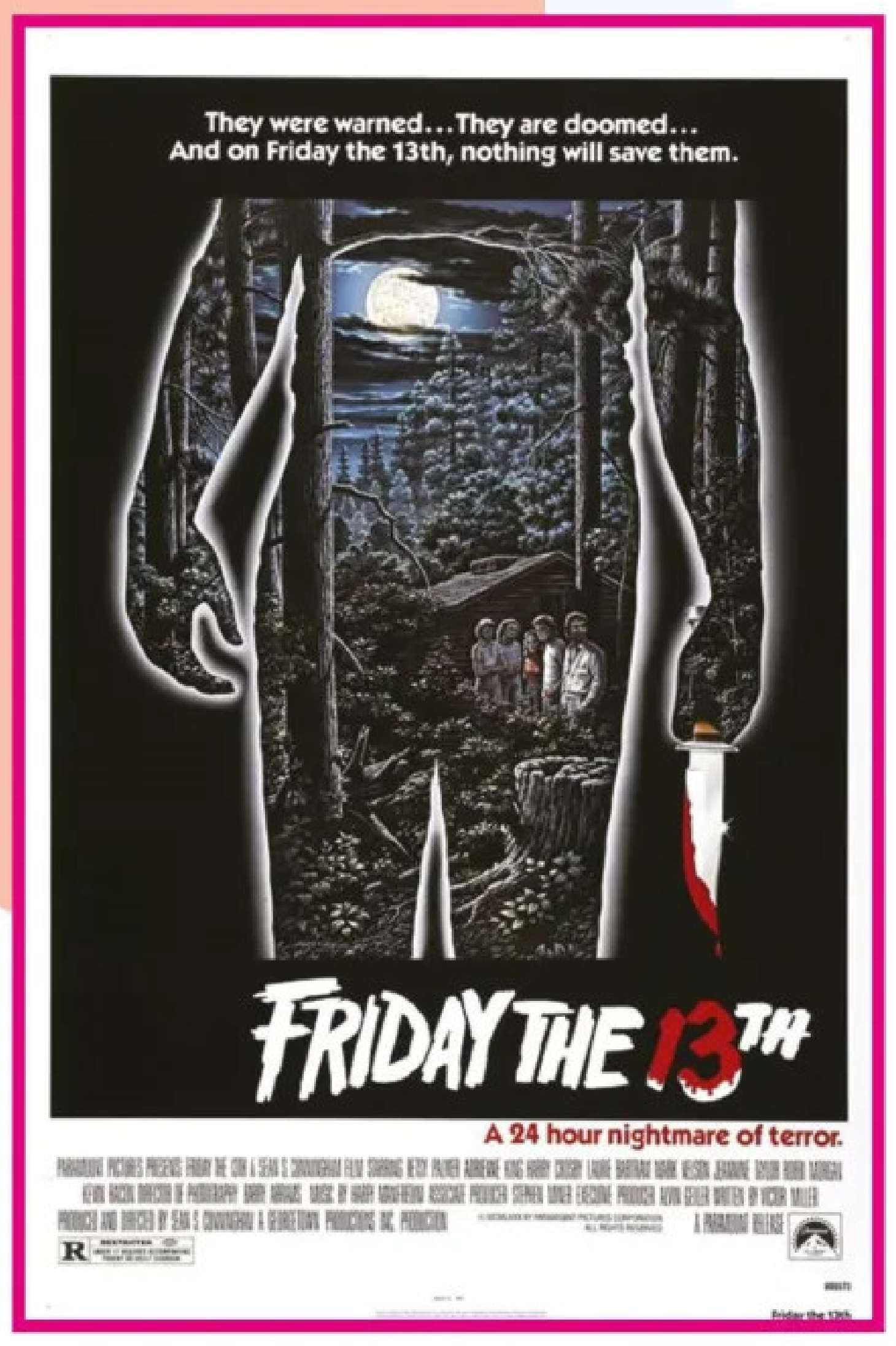

Pour le FBI, c'est un espion international.
Pour le Pentagone, c'est une puissance mondiale.
Pour ses parents, c'est un gamin qui joue dans sa chambre avec son ordinateur.
WARGAMES

## Friday The 13th

1980

**35**

The series that made Jason Voorhees and his hockey mask a horror movie legend started with… a woman. It was actually Jason's mother, Pamela, who was responsible for killing the cast one by one in the original *Friday The 13th*, before Jason went on to become a horror icon in the subsequent sequels.

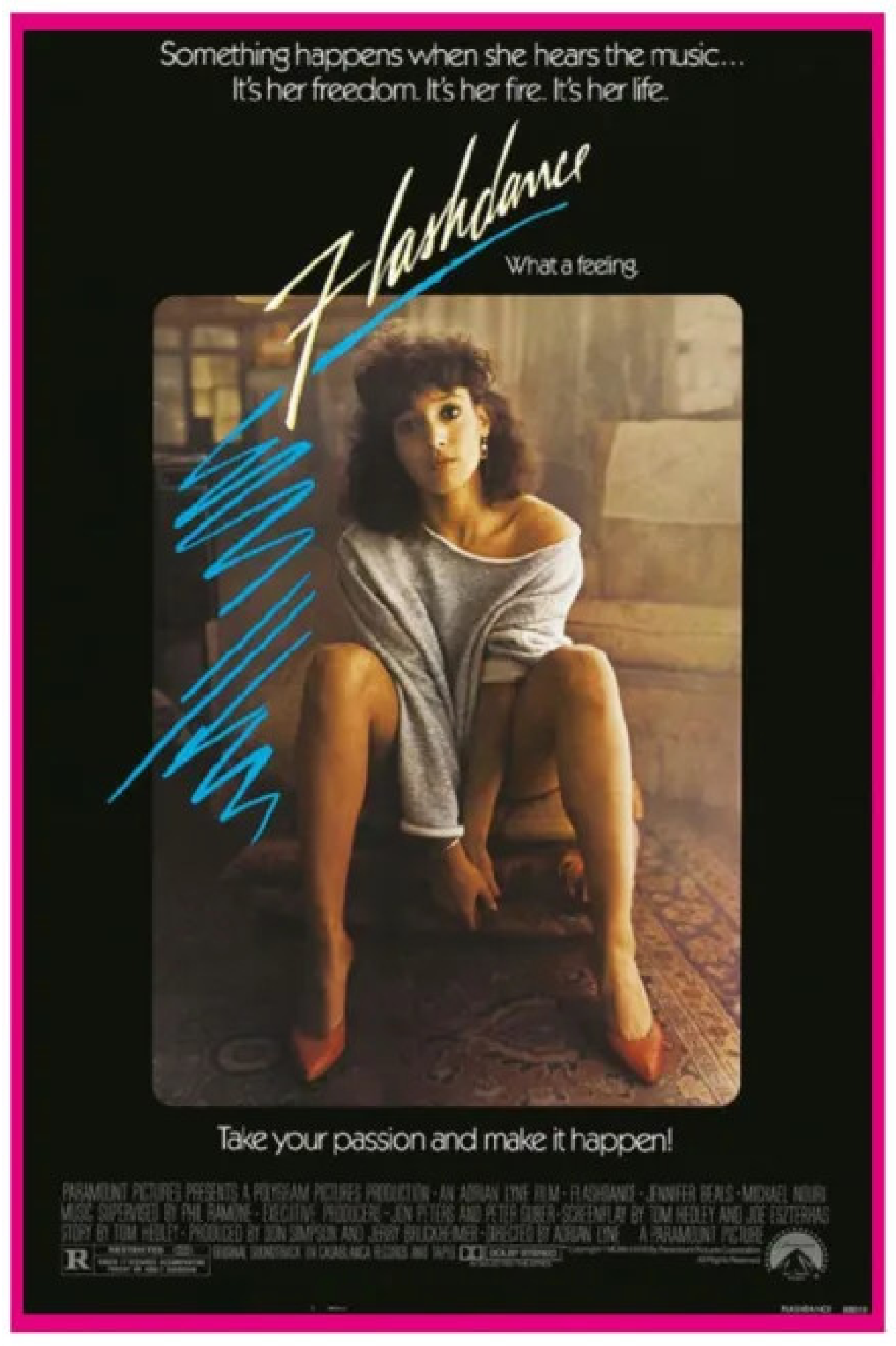

They were warned…They are doomed…
And on Friday the 13th, nothing will save them.
FRIDAY THE 13TH
A 24 hour nightmare of terror.

## Flashdance

1983

**36**

This story about a Pittsburgh welder called Alex trying to make it as a dancer was a surprise box-office hit. But that wasn't the biggest success story here. *Flashdance* the movie was eclipsed by its own title track, which hit the top of the music charts, earned an Academy Award, and made Alex dancing one of the enduring images of the '80s to boot.

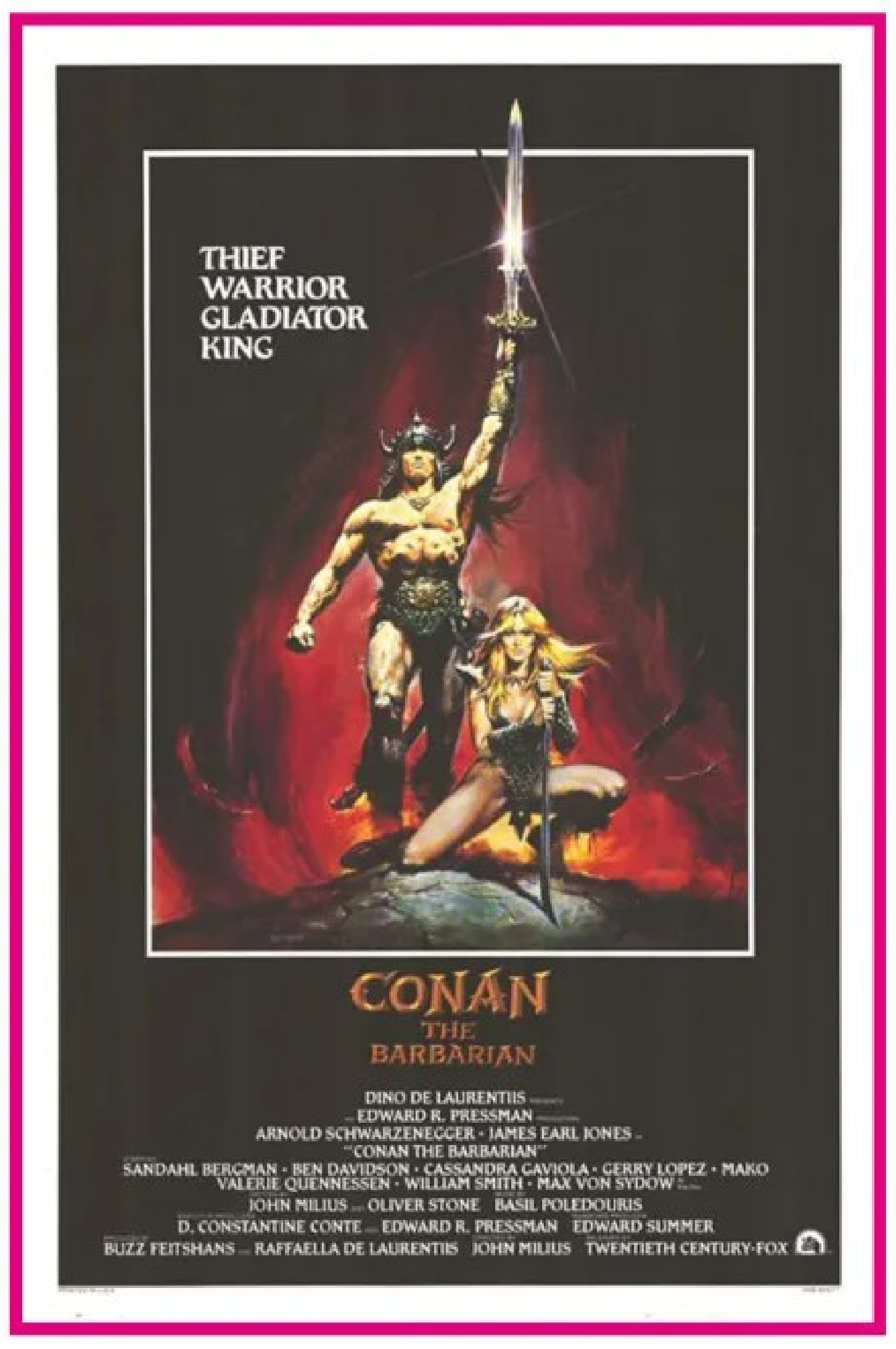

Something happens when she hears the music…
It's her freedom. It's her fire. It's her life.
Flashdance
What a feeling
Take your passion and make it happen!

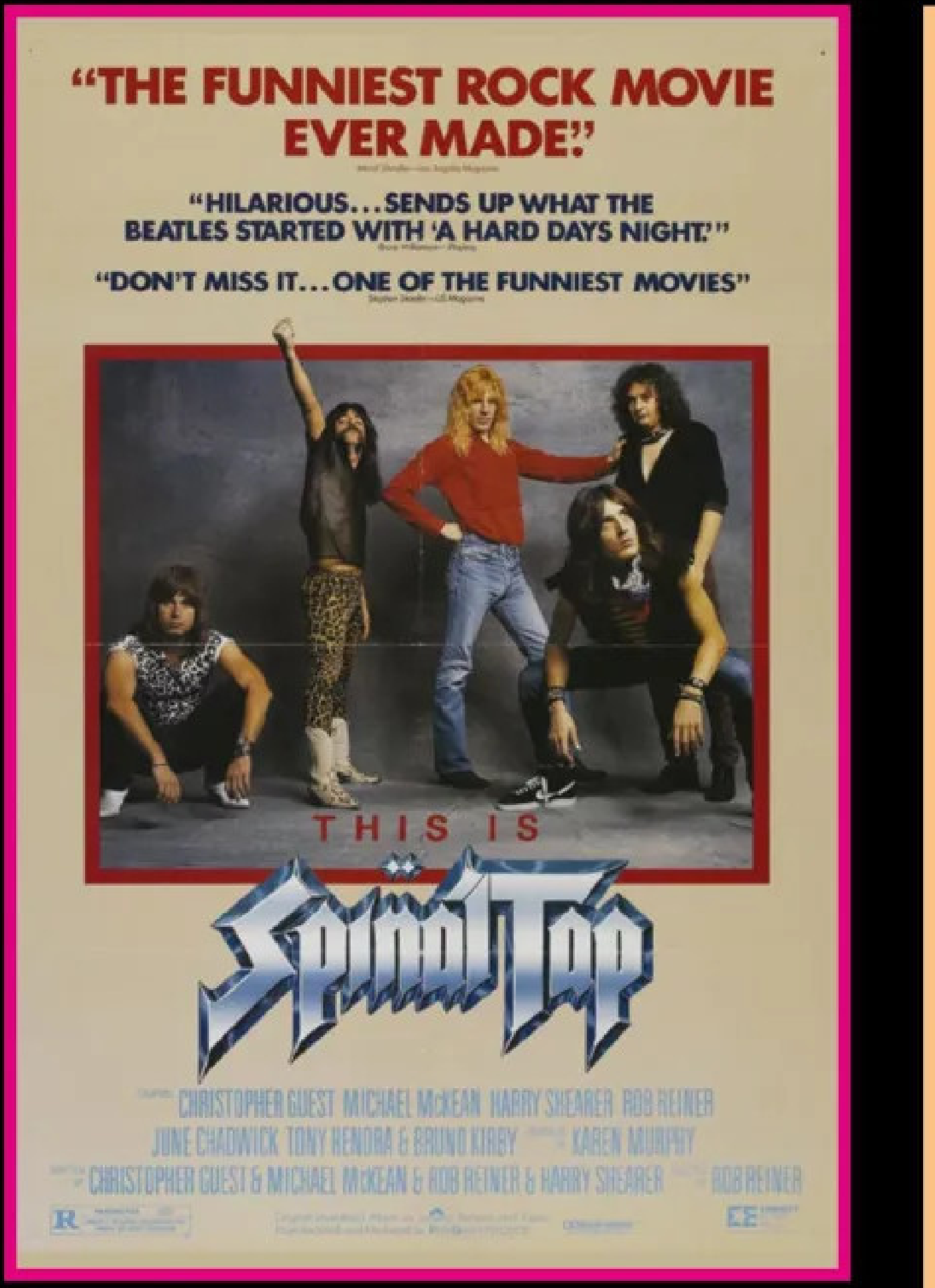
## Conan The Barbarian

1982

**37**

It was the film that brought Arnold Schwarzenegger to the world, playing to his strengths (comic-book physique) and hiding his weaknesses (giving him almost no dialogue). The hulking Austrian actor made his mark, however, with *Conan* being the first sign of his movie dominance for the next decade.

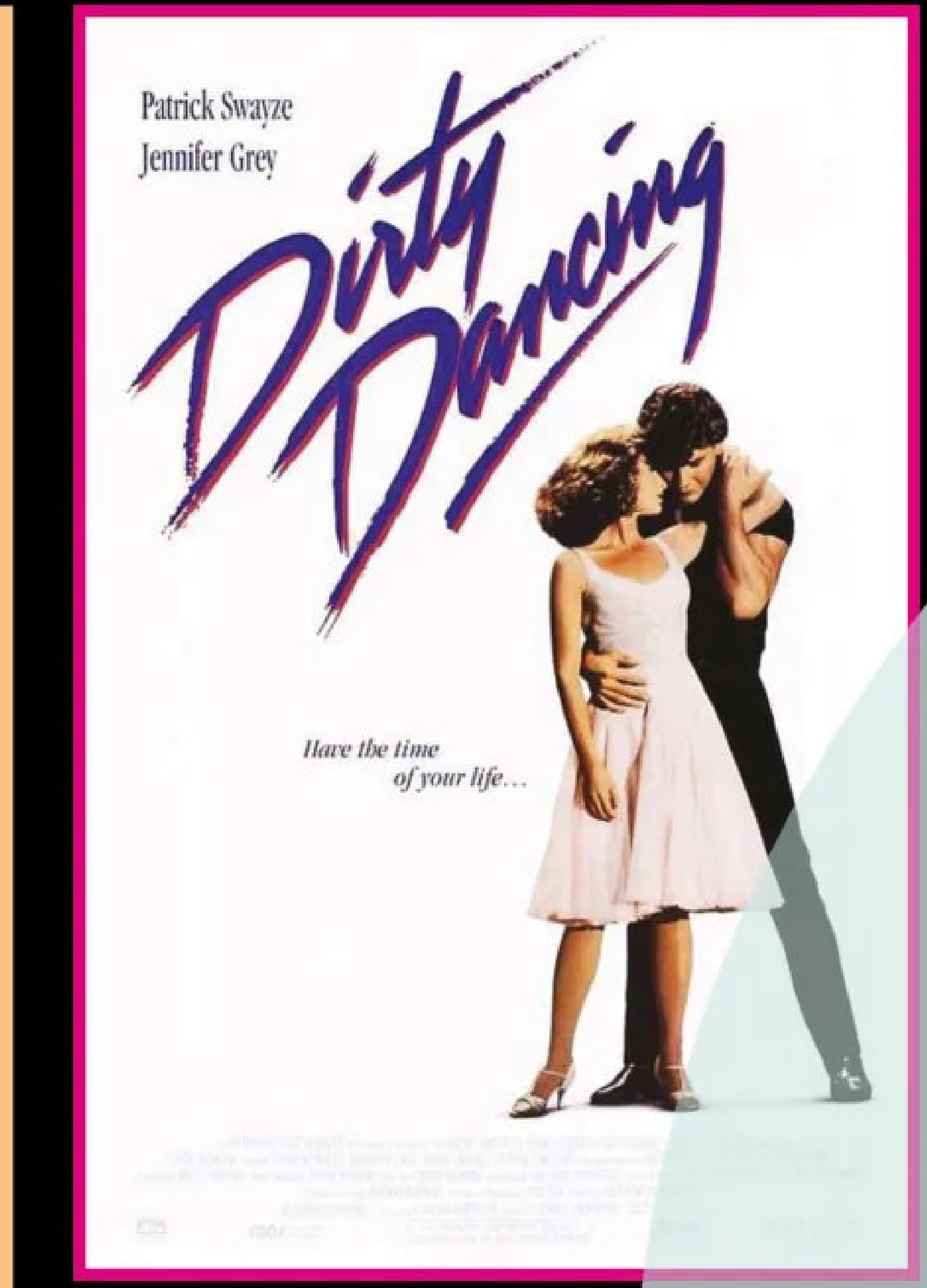

THIEF
WARRIOR
GLADIATOR
KING
CONAN THE BARBARIAN


"THE FUNNIEST ROCK MOVIE EVER MADE."
"HILARIOUS…SENDS UP WHAT THE BEATLES STARTED WITH 'A HARD DAYS NIGHT.'"
"DON'T MISS IT…ONE OF THE FUNNIEST MOVIES"
THIS IS
Spinal Tap

## This Is Spinal Tap

1984

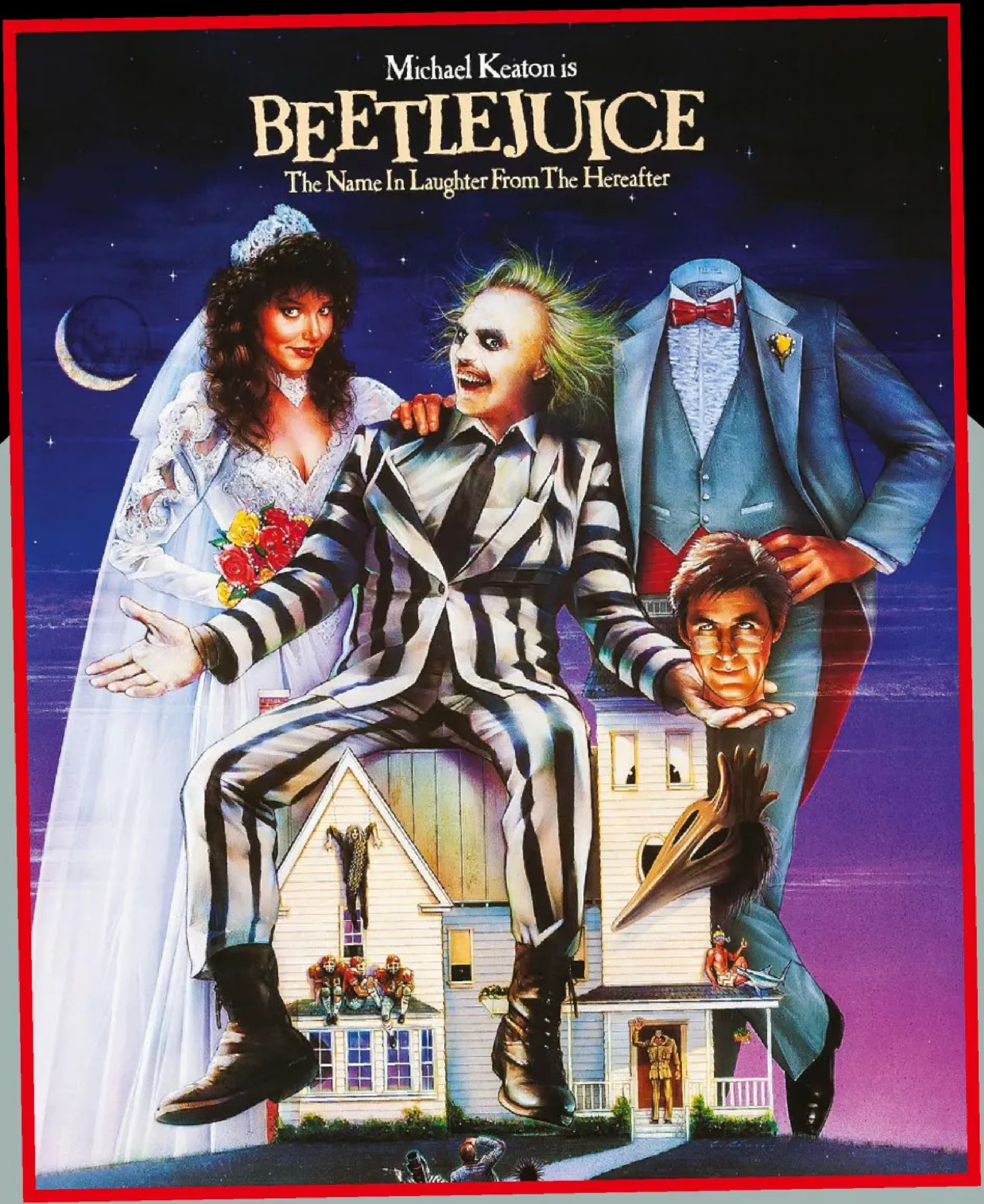
**38** Whenever you refer to something being turned up to 11, you can thank *This Is Spinal Tap*. The hilarious rock mockumentary – a genre that the film helped to pioneer – parodied the bad hair and worse outfits of metal bands of the '80s, with the likes of Metallica and Glenn Danzig paying tribute to the comedy after release for its accuracy.


Patrick Swayze
Jennifer Grey
Dirty Dancing
Have the time of your life…

## Dirty Dancing

1987

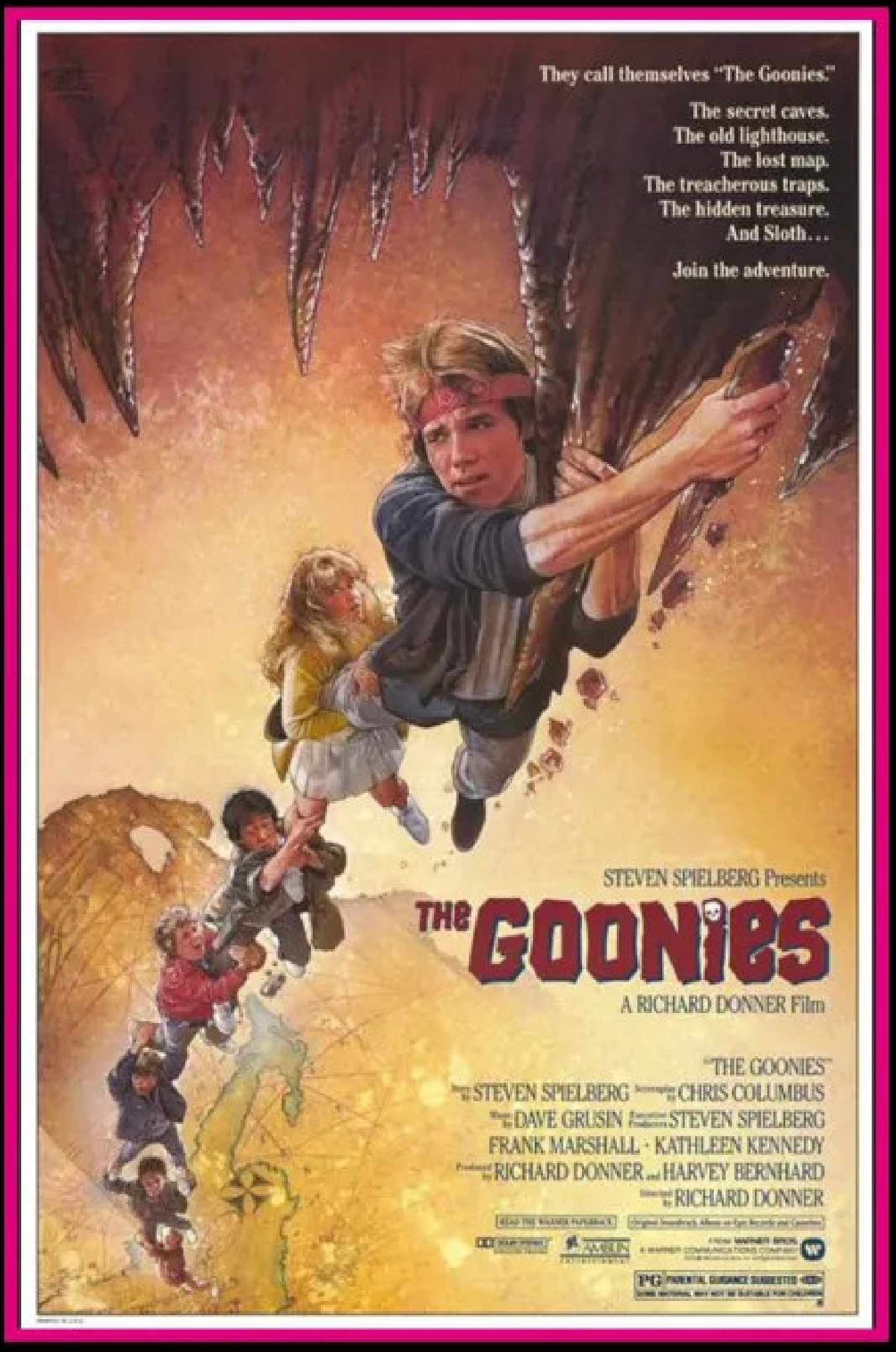
**39** This romantic movie sizzled for all the right reasons, thanks to the amazing on-screen chemistry between Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey, along with their hot dancing. Once all the drama settled, *Dirty Dancing* also closed with one of the most unashamedly joyous endings of the '80s, with everyone dancing to '(I've Had) The Time Of My Life'. And we owe it all to them!


Michael Keaton is
BEETLEJUICE
The Name In Laughter From The Hereafter

## ▲Beetlejuice

1988

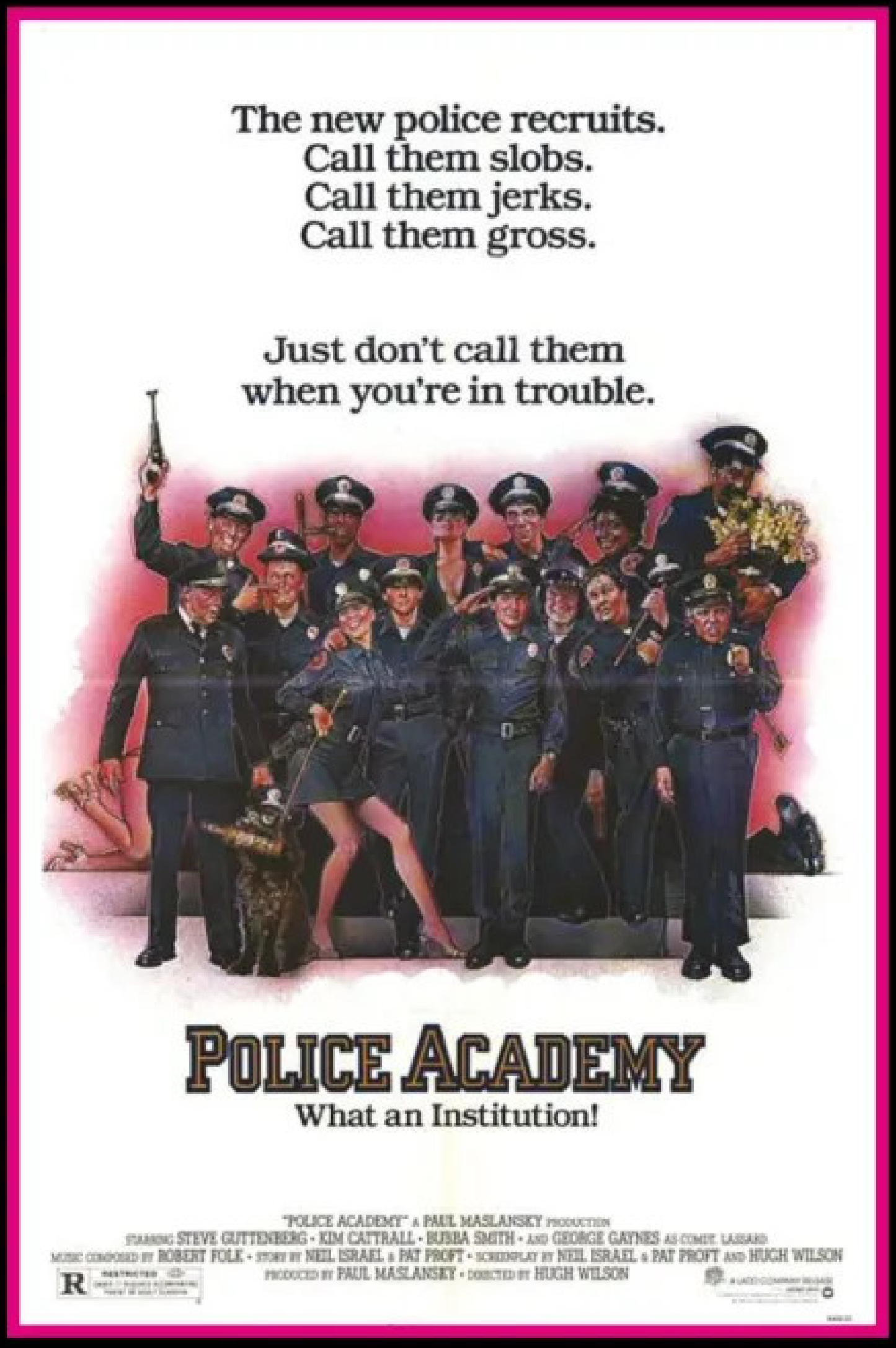
**40** One of the most memorable characters of the '80s is Beetlejuice, a wild-haired ghost in a monochrome striped suit. Mischievous, deviant but never downbeat, Beetlejuice crackled with a nervous, skittish energy that meant you could never take your eyes off him.


They call themselves "The Goonies."
The secret caves.
The old lighthouse.
The lost map.
The treacherous traps.
The hidden treasure.
And Sloth…
Join the adventure.
STEVEN SPIELBERG Presents
THE GOONIES
A RICHARD DONNER Film

## The Goonies

1985

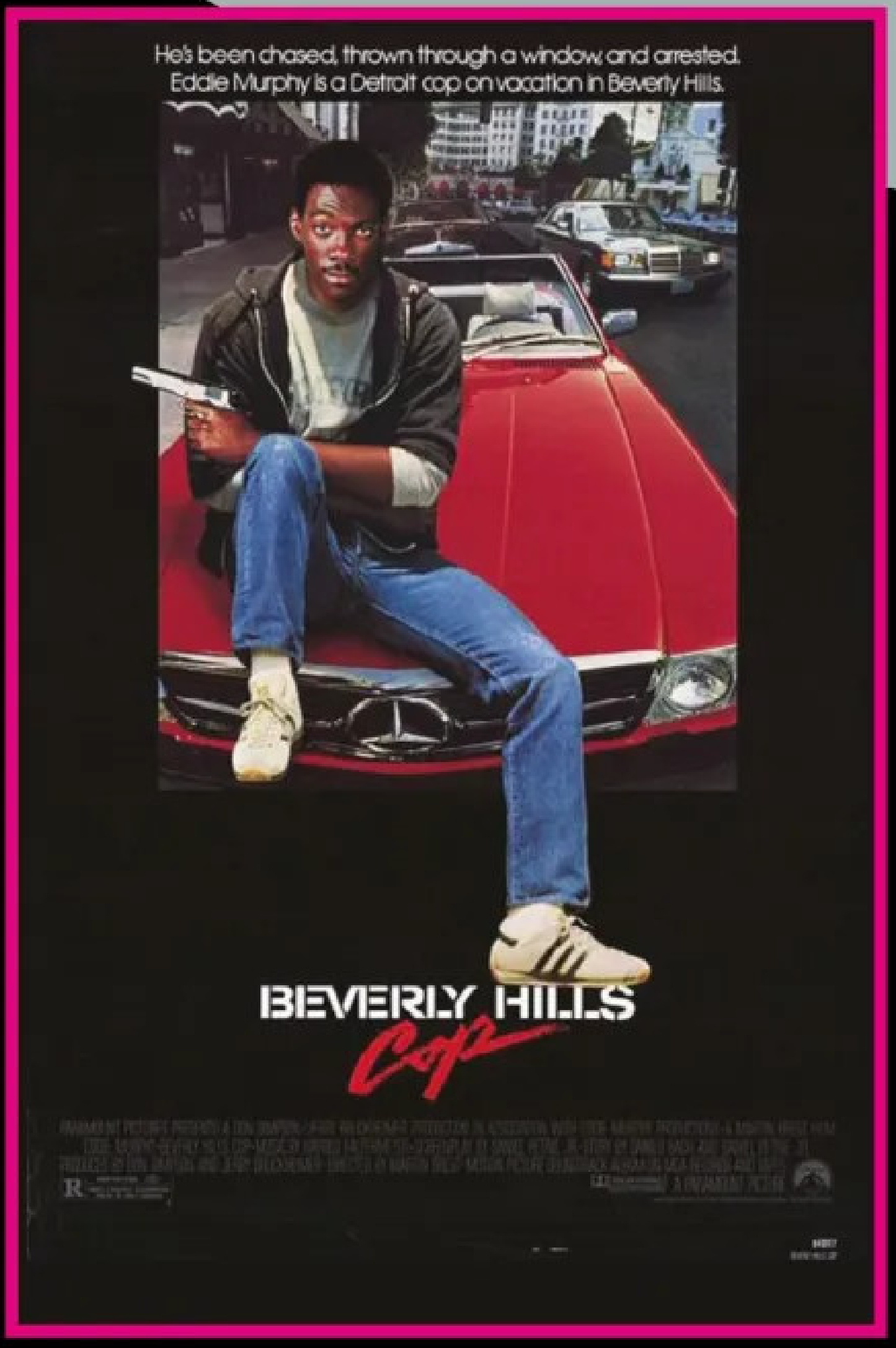
**41** Nothing captured the spirit of adventure when you were a kid quite like *The Goonies* did. The tale of kids setting off to find hidden treasure mirrored your own adventures, whether you were rooting around the back garden of your home or exploring every corner of the local park. Fortunately, none of us would have had Sloth chasing us while doing so…


The new police recruits.
Call them slobs.
Call them jerks.
Call them gross.
Just don't call them when you're in trouble.
POLICE ACADEMY
What an Institution!

## Police Academy

1984

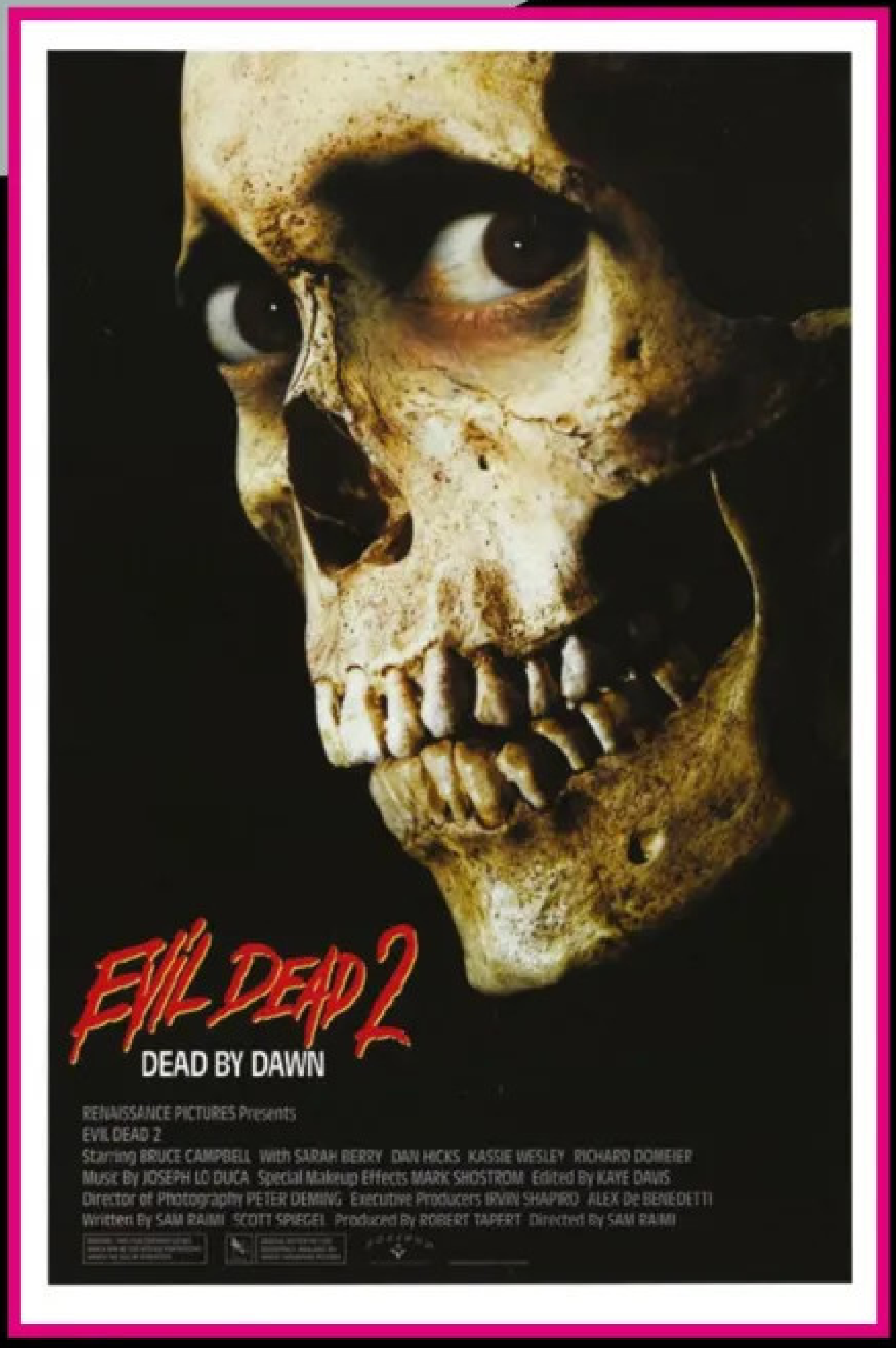
**42** Who was your favourite police academy recruit? Beatboxing Larvell Jones, imitating everything from gunfire to couples arguing? The psychotic Tackleberry? The hyperactive Zed, as lovable as he was weird? No matter who you preferred, if you were around in the '80s, you were obligated to pick a favourite from the *Police Academy* series...


He's been chased, thrown through a window and arrested.
Eddie Murphy is a Detroit cop on vacation in Beverly Hills.
BEVERLY HILLS Cop

## Beverly Hills Cop

1984

**43** Fast-paced comedy *Beverly Hills Cop* was an embodiment of everything American in the '80s. The glamour of Beverly Hills. The black cop from Detroit. The street-smart versus the rich conflict at its centre. The cocaine-focused plot. And, of course, it was powered by the keyboard synths of catchy instrumental theme 'Axel F'.


EVIL DEAD 2
DEAD BY DAWN

## Evil Dead 2

1987

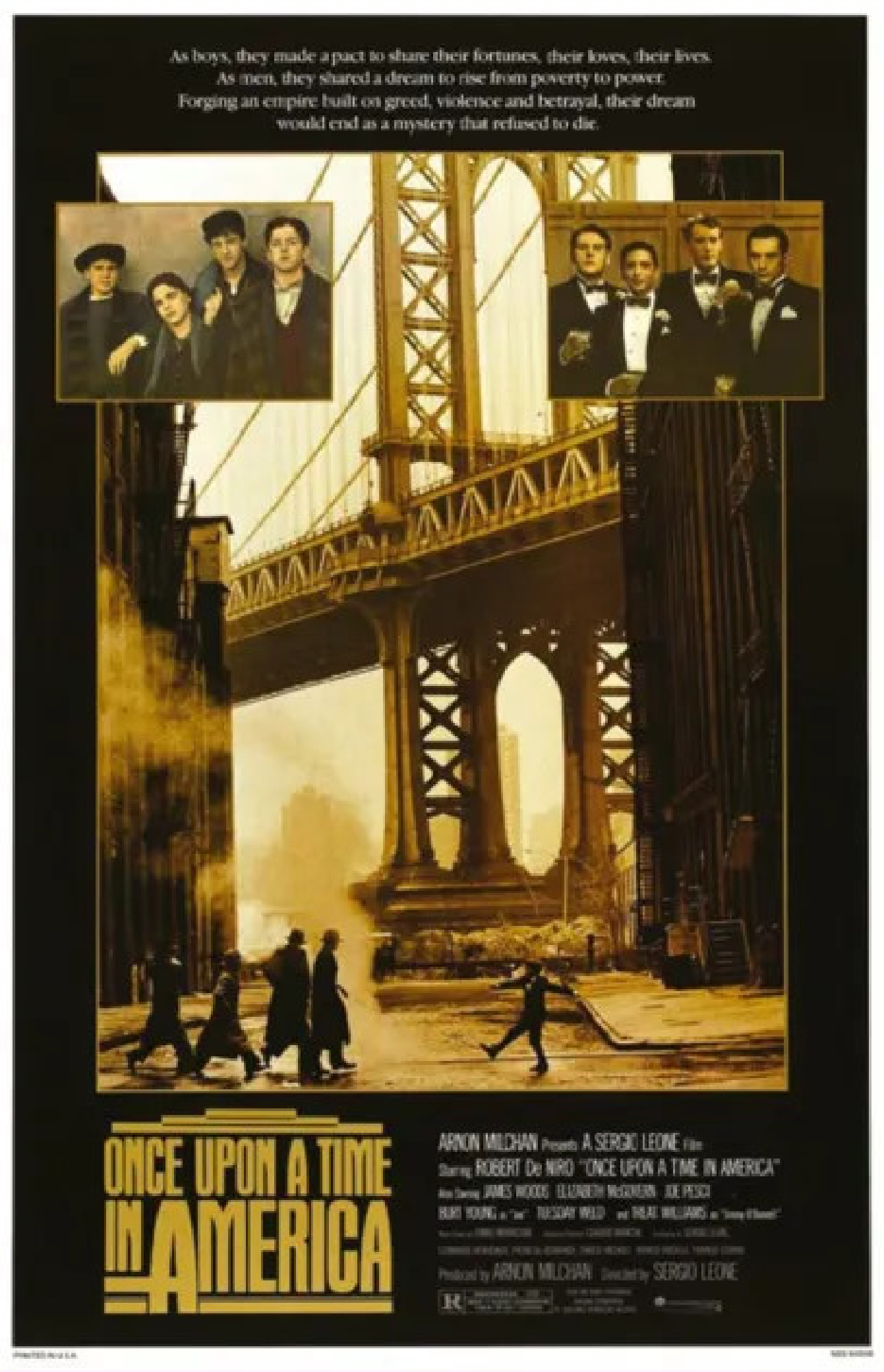
**44** Horror and slapstick comedy were booming genres in the '80s, but *Evil Dead 2: Dead By Dawn* was the first movie to combine the two. The combination of Sam Raimi's hyperactive direction and Bruce Campbell's endless charisma made for a film that effortlessly alternated between buckets of laughs and buckets of gore.

PART MAN,
PART MACHINE,
ALL COP.
DETROIT POLICE
ROBOCOP
THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
A Jon Davison PRODUCTION • A Paul Verhoeven FILM • Peter Weller • Nancy Allen • Robocop • Daniel O'Herlihy
Ronny Cox • Kurtwood Smith • Miguel Ferrer • MUSIC BY Basil Poledouris • DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Jost Vacano
FILM EDITOR Frank J. Urioste • ROBOCOP DESIGNED BY Rob Bottin • EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Jon Davison
WRITTEN BY Edward Neumeier & Michael Miner • PRODUCED BY Arne Schmidt • DIRECTED BY Paul Verhoeven
RESTRICTED
UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING
DOLBY STEREO
IN SELECTED THEATRES
PRINTS BY DeLuxe®
READ THE DELL BOOK
An ORION® PICTURES Release

### Robocop

1987

**45** With crime making inner-city Detroit a no-go area, there was almost a whiff of plausibility about RoboCop, the robotic law enforcer created to clean it up. As a movie, *RoboCop* was as smart as it was bloody, finding room to lampoon corporate culture among its endless shoot-outs.


ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA

### Once Upon A Time In America

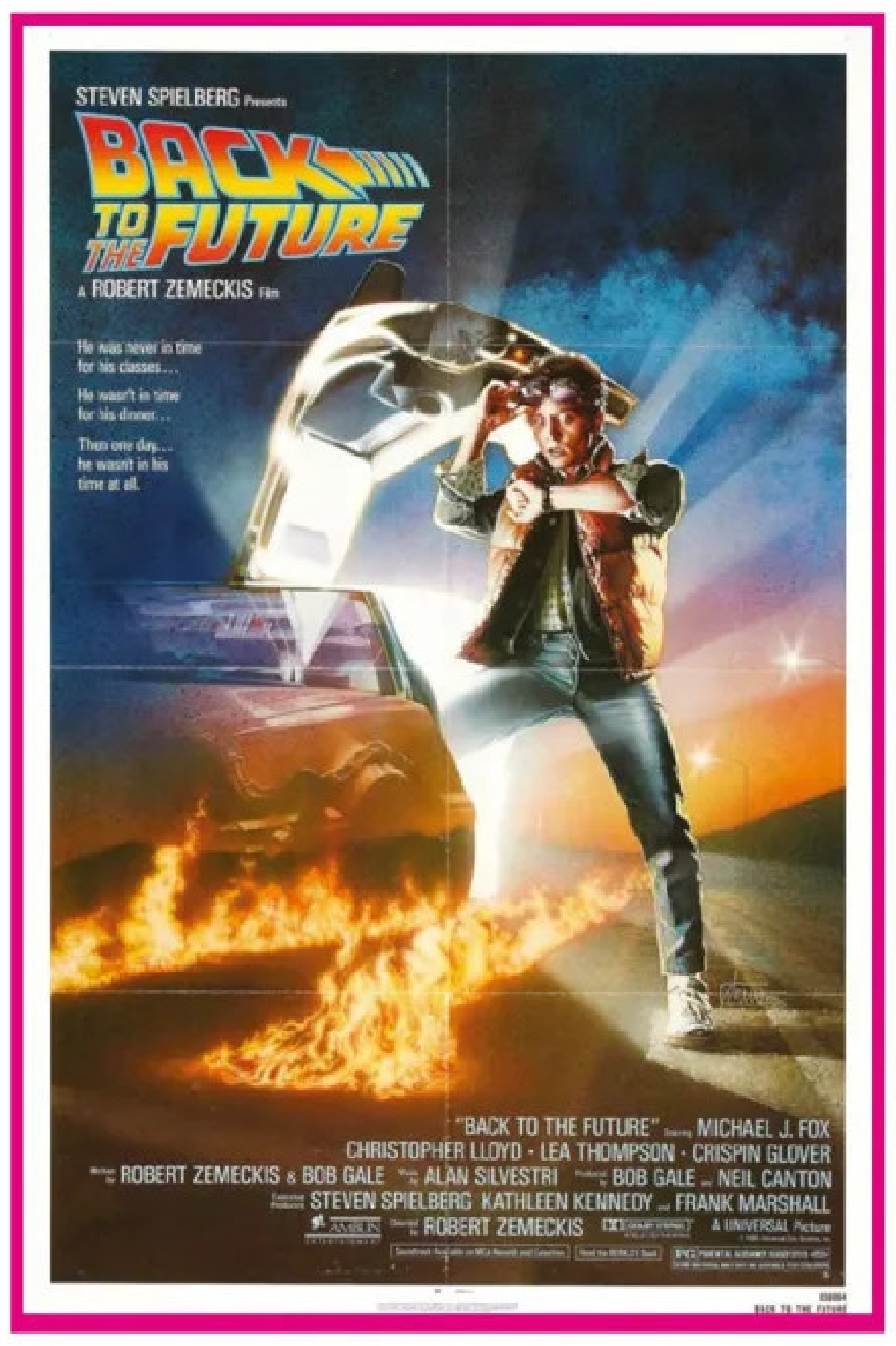
1984

**46** This 229-minute epic was the last film for legendary director Sergio Leone, chronicling the rise of mobsters and organised crime in New York. Nothing felt quite as epic as *Once Upon A Time In America*, which kept the drama taut from its opening shot until the final credits.

## Back To The Future

1985

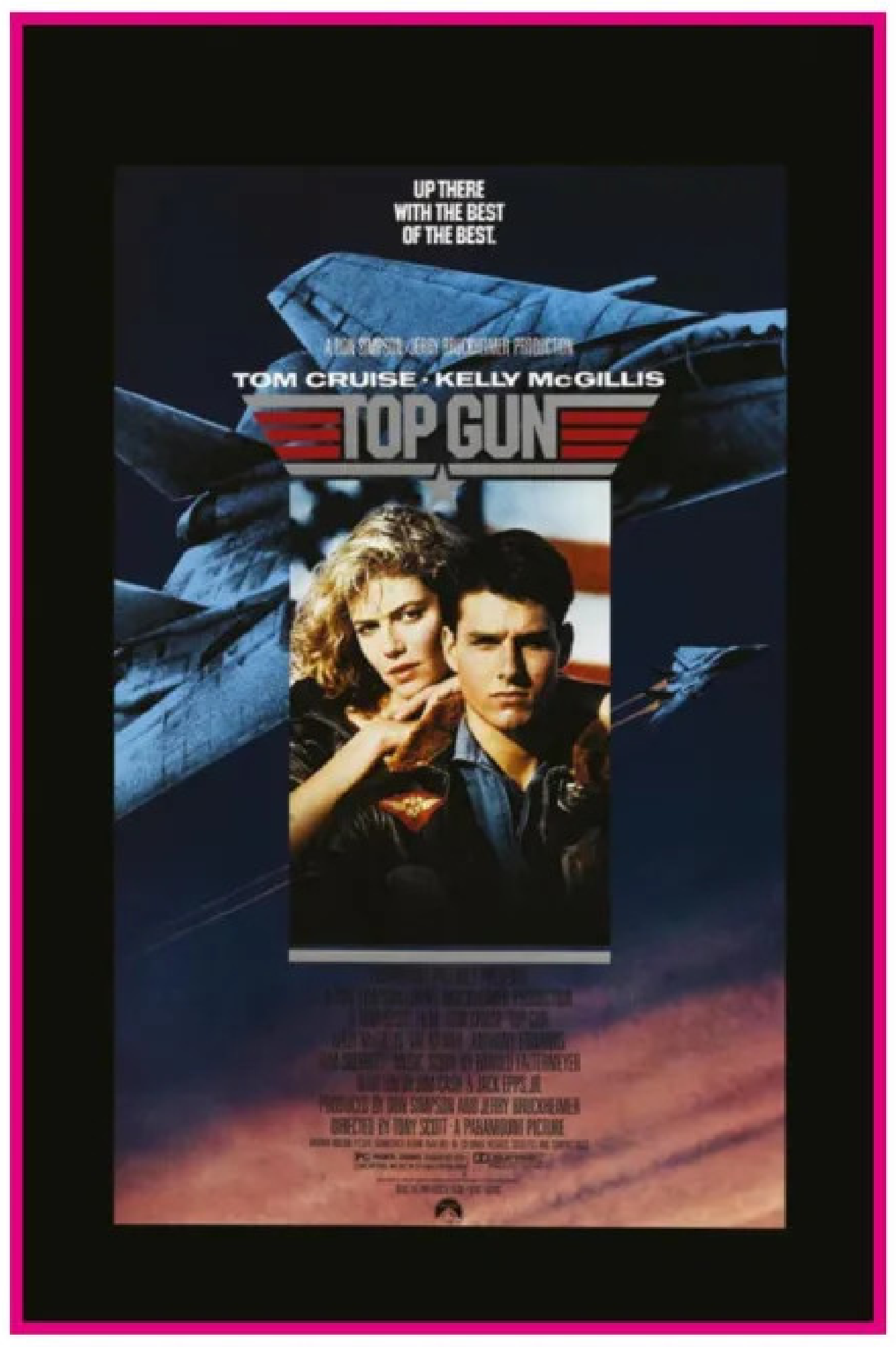
**47** This adventure is rich in imagination and full of heart, thanks to its two likeable leads in Michael J. Fox as fun-loving Marty McFly and Christopher Lloyd as eccentric inventor Doc. There's also real intrigue with the time-travelling plot, and all these elements combined for one of the most iconic and entertaining films of the '80s.


STEVEN SPIELBERG Presents
BACK TO THE FUTURE
A ROBERT ZEMECKIS Film
He was never in time for his classes...
He wasn't in time for his dinner...
Then one day... he wasn't in his time at all.

## Top Gun

1986

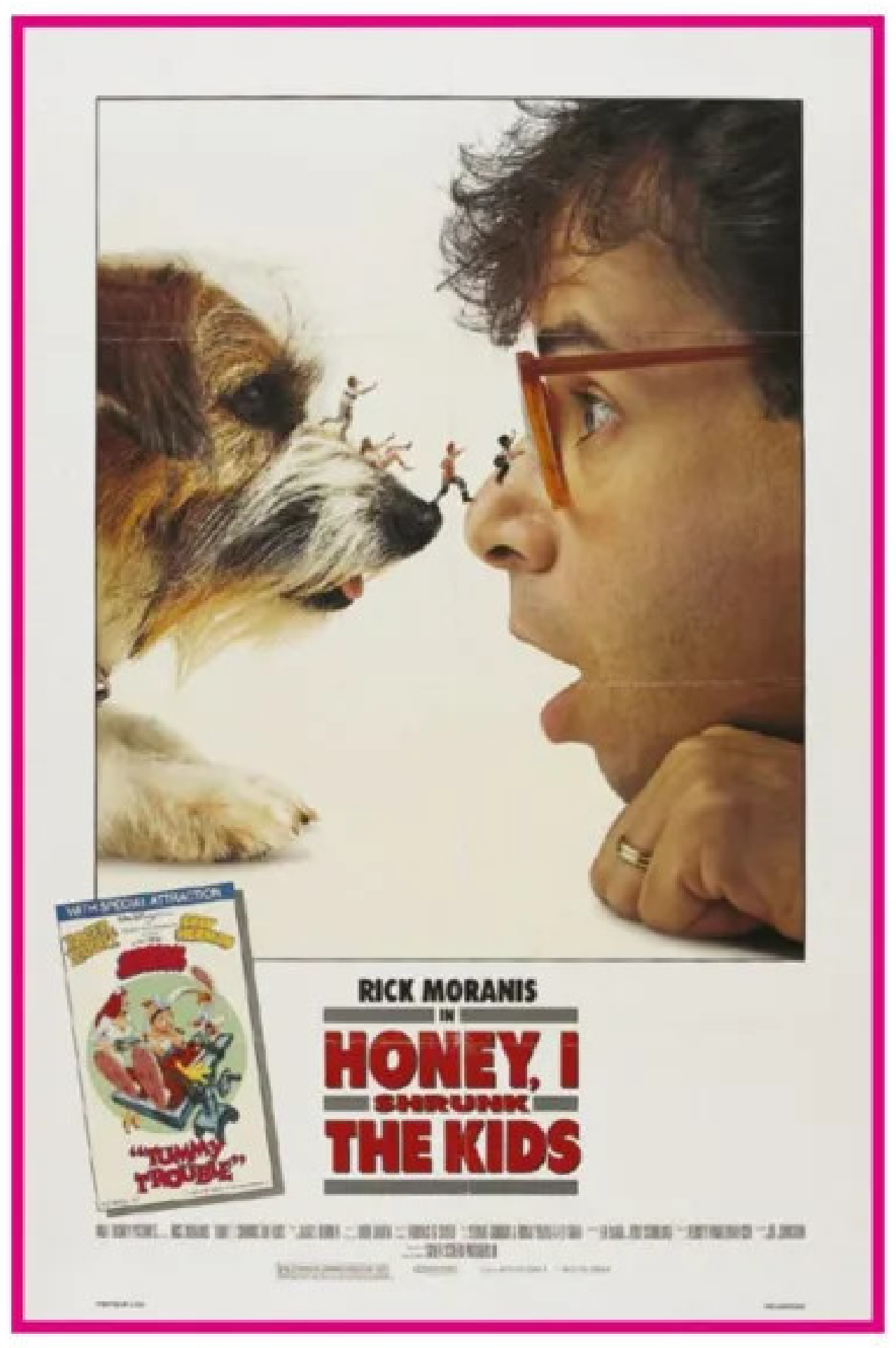
**48** Squealing guitars, fighter jets, shirtless volleyball and characters called Goose and Maverick. Could this film have been made in any other era? *Top Gun* is as much a love letter to the military as it is to the bromances at the centre of the movie, while the soundtrack also made a major splash, with 'Take My Breath Away' and 'Danger Zone' becoming huge hits.


UP THERE WITH THE BEST OF THE BEST.
TOM CRUISE · KELLY McGILLIS
TOP GUN

## Honey, I Shrunk The Kids

1989

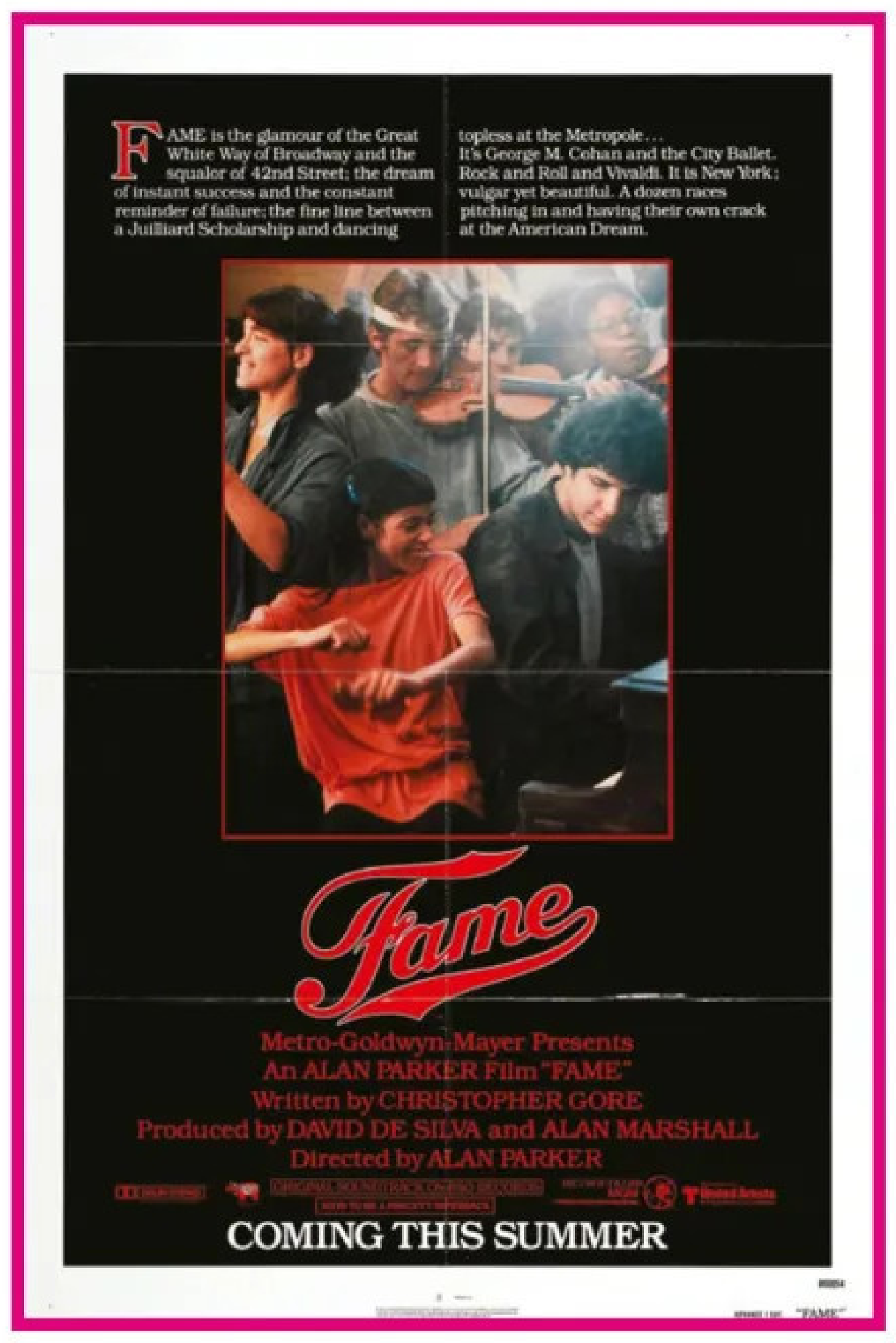
**49** When madcap inventor Wayne Szalinski accidentally shrunk his kids, it not only set the stage for a brilliantly inventive comedy, but it also gave us an intimate look at the American household and the items that fill it. You'll see all sorts of '80s curios on display here, albeit at giant size!


RICK MORANIS
HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS

## Fame

1980

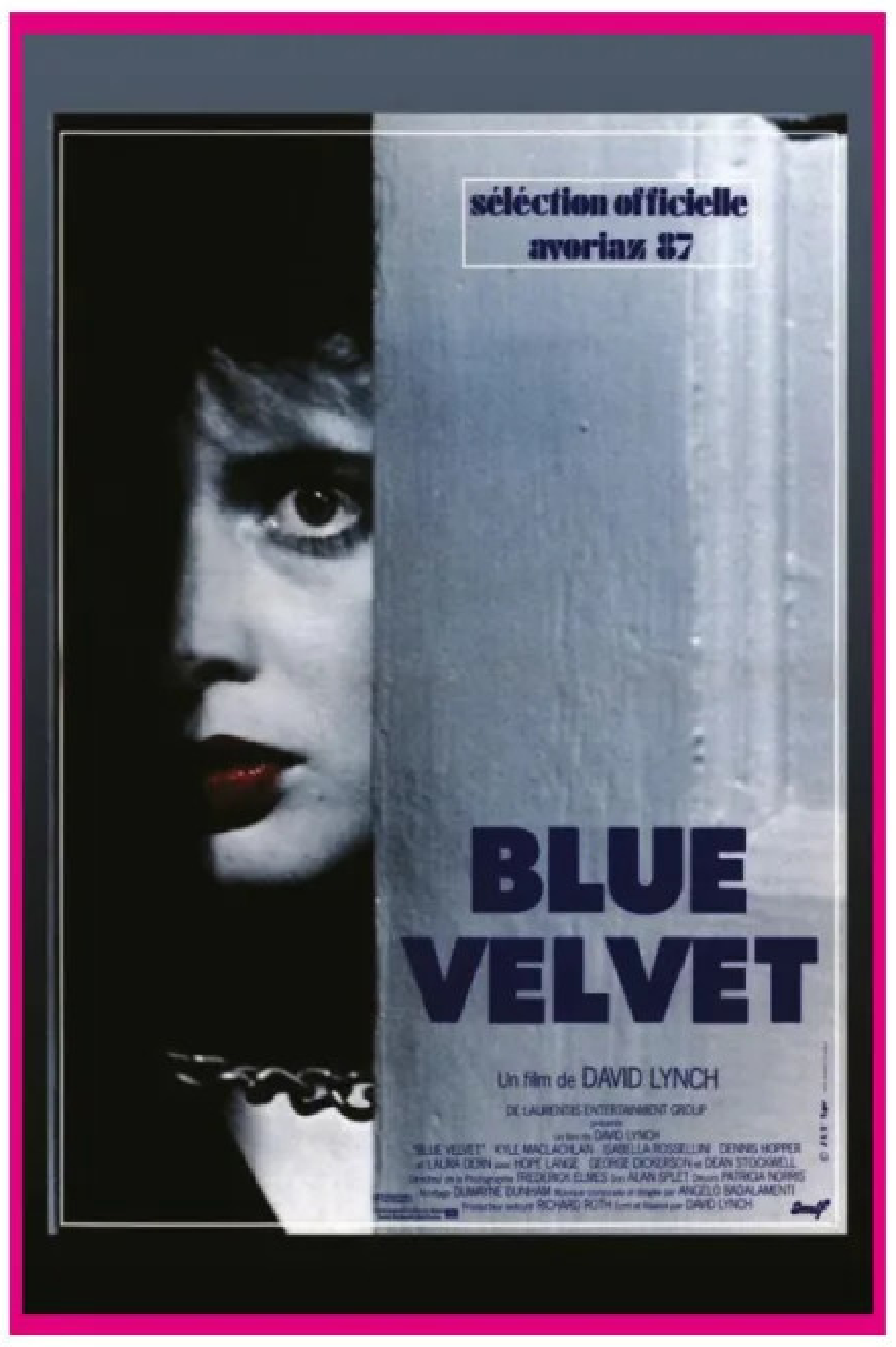
**50** With its headbands, legwarmers, big hair and street dancing, musical drama *Fame* captured the spirit and style of the '80s perfectly. Its title track also became one of the biggest hits of the era and its 'I'm going to live forever' line perfectly sums up the energy, optimism and vibrancy of the film itself. Energy that remakes and adaptations have since tried, and failed, to recapture.

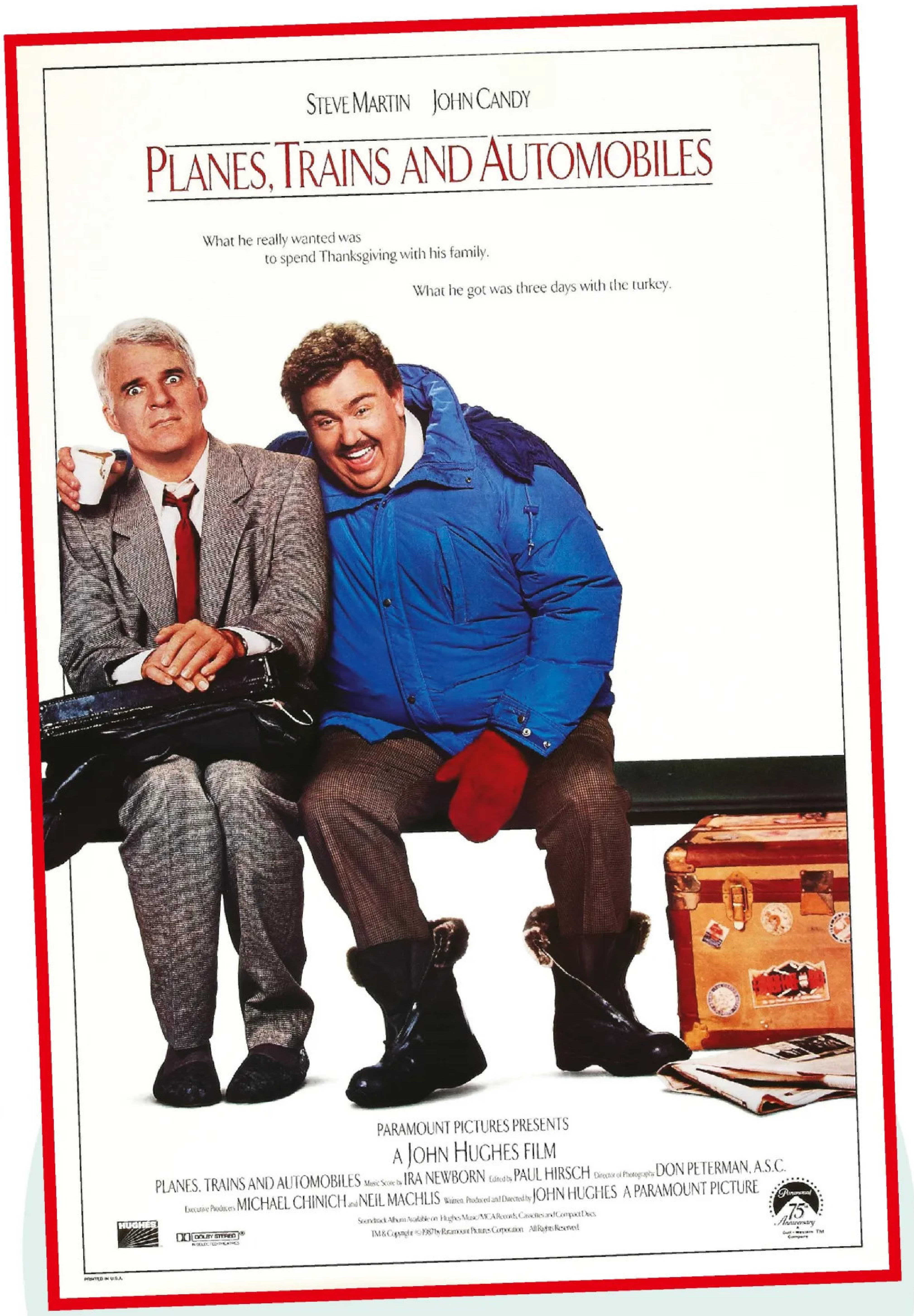

Fame
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Presents
An ALAN PARKER Film "FAME"
Written by CHRISTOPHER GORE
Produced by DAVID DE SILVA and ALAN MARSHALL
Directed by ALAN PARKER
COMING THIS SUMMER

## Blue Velvet

1986

**51** Considered one of the greatest movies of the '80s – and perhaps one of the greatest films of all time – David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* is a curious blend of psychological horror and sexual thriller. A fascinating film that dances between ridiculous surrealism and serious drama, it demands several more viewings in order to peel through its many layers.


sélection officielle avoriaz 87
BLUE VELVET
Un film de DAVID LYNCH


STEVE MARTIN JOHN CANDY
PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES
What he really wanted was to spend Thanksgiving with his family.
What he got was three days with the turkey.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS
A JOHN HUGHES FILM
PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES Music Score by IRA NEWBORN Edited by PAUL HIRSCH Director of Photography DON PETERMAN, A.S.C.
Executive Producers MICHAEL CHINICH and NEIL MACHLIS Written, Produced and Directed by JOHN HUGHES A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

## Planes, Trains and Automobiles ▲

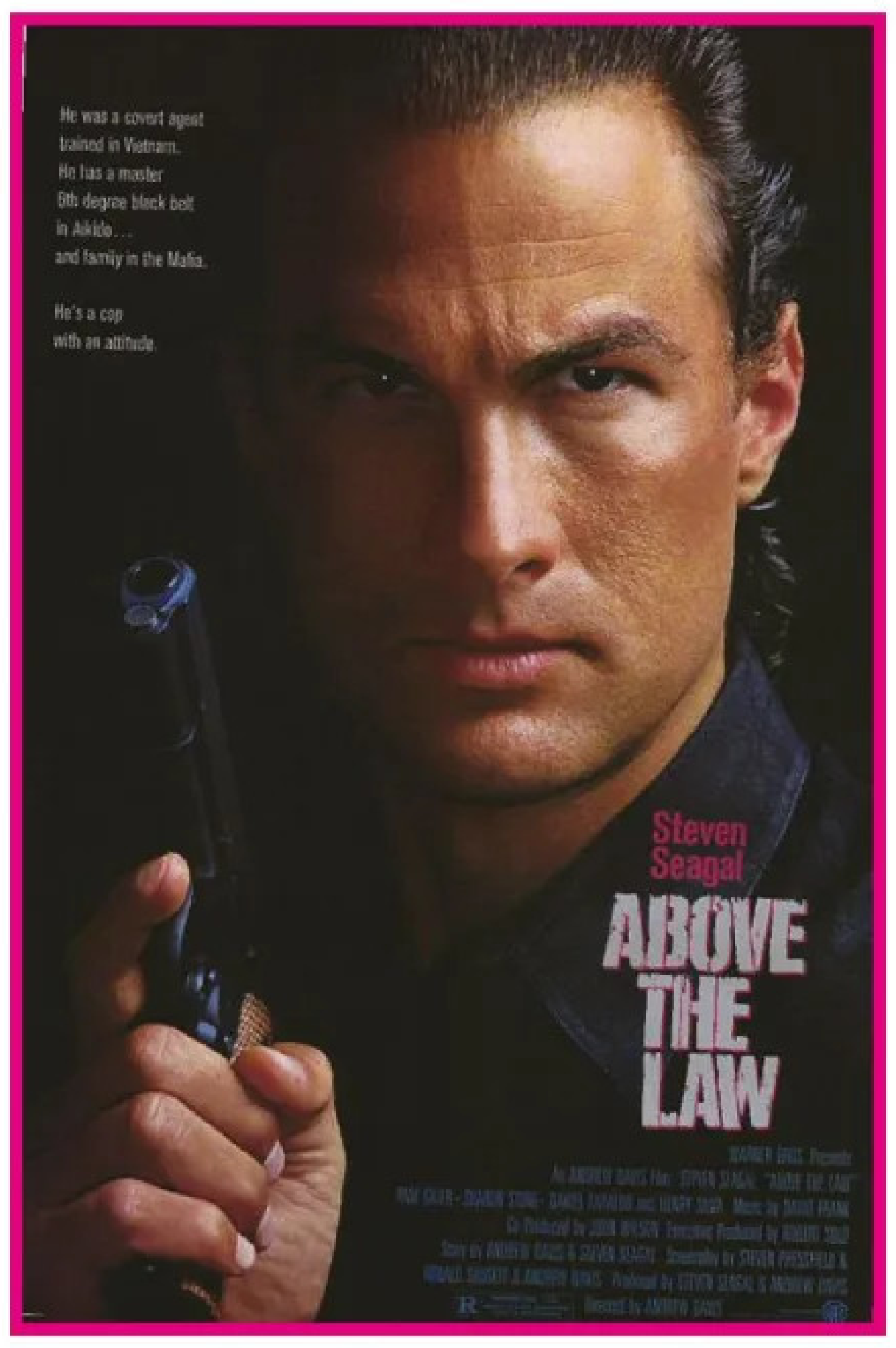
1987

**52** Steve Martin and John Candy get the perfect chance to show off their acting chops alongside their comedy skills, in a film that ranges from family comedy to road movie. Although it wasn't a huge success, the movie's stellar acting and warm heart made it one of the best of its time.

## Above The Law

1988

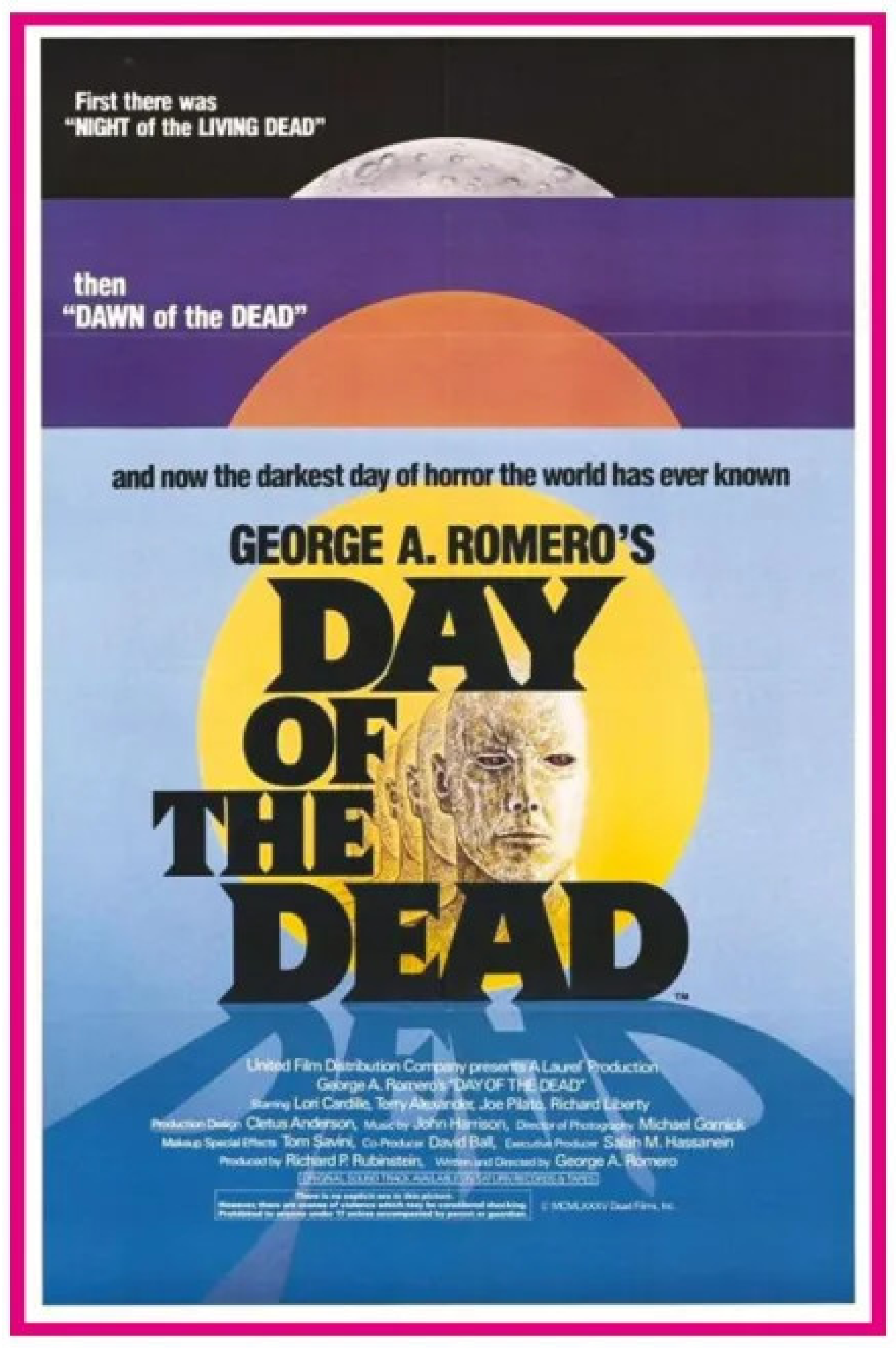
**53** A new action star made his movie debut just as the 1980s were drawing to a close – Steven Seagal. Although he's primarily known nowadays for his strange outfits and ill-fated forays into law enforcement for TV, his real-life aikido skills made him a credible action hero at the time, and saw *Above The Law* become a box-office success.


He was a covert agent trained in Vietnam.
He has a master 5th degree black belt in Aikido…
and family in the Mafia.
He's a cop with an attitude.
Steven Seagal
ABOVE THE LAW

## Day Of The Dead

1985

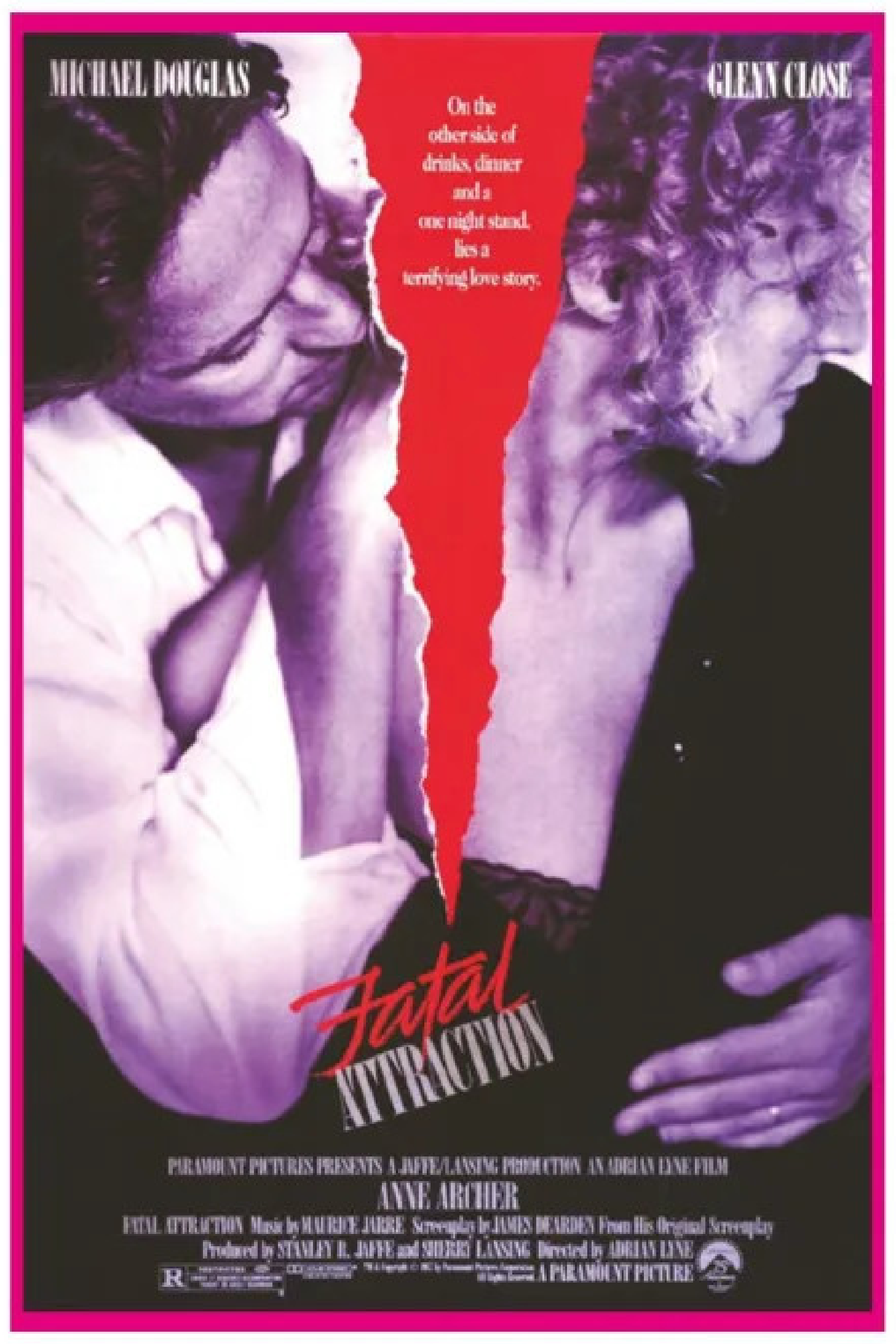
**54** With the golden age of zombie movies drawing to a close, George Romero still had one last huge hit in him – until 2005's *Land of the Dead*, that is. Taking place in a small military bunker, *Day of the Dead* shows that desperate survivors are as much of a threat to each other as a mindless horde of bloodthirsty zombies.


First there was "NIGHT of the LIVING DEAD"
then "DAWN of the DEAD"
and now the darkest day of horror the world has ever known
GEORGE A. ROMERO'S
DAY OF THE DEAD

## Fatal Attraction

1987

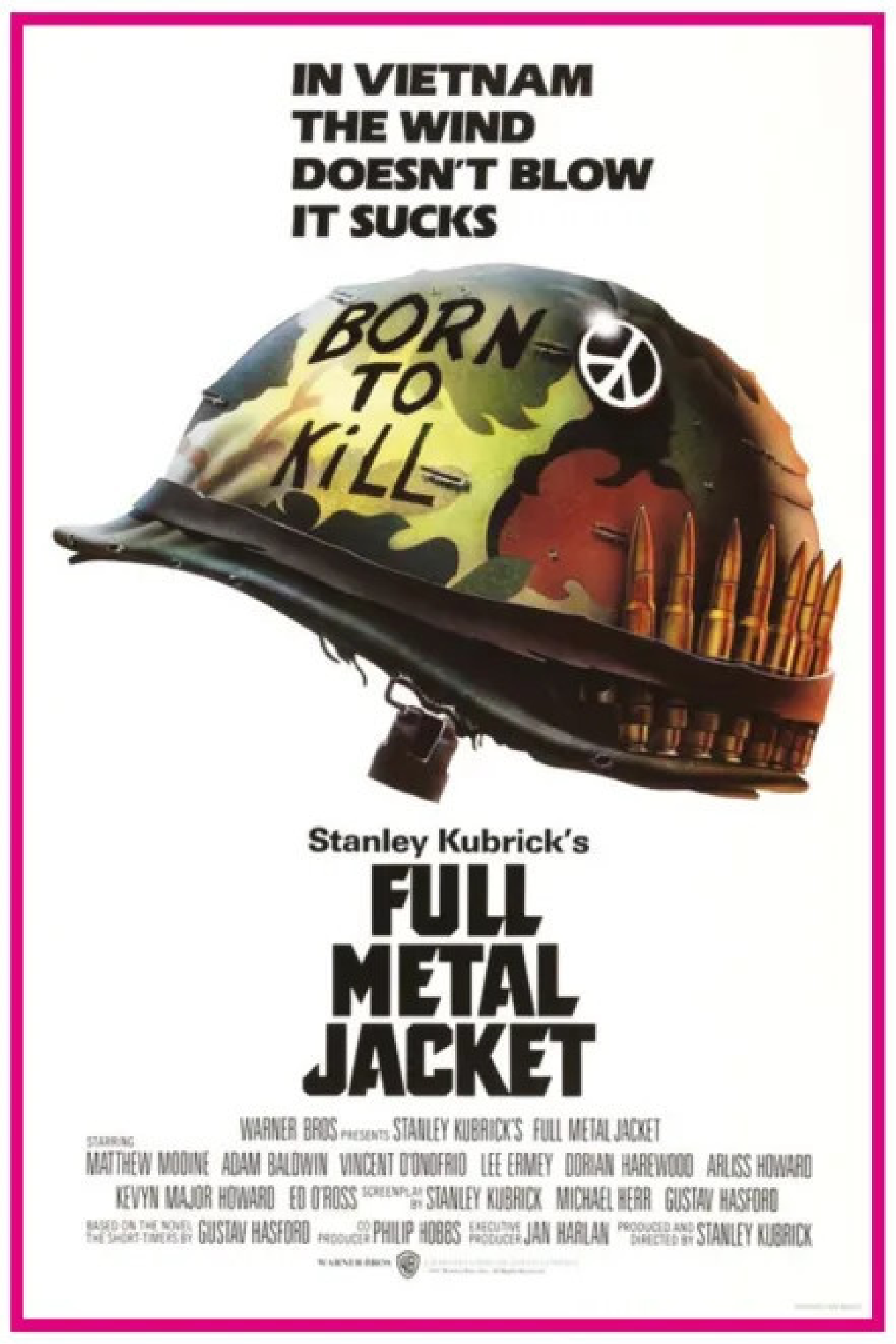
**55** Want to know where the phrase 'bunny boiler' comes from? Glenn Close plays jilted love Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction*, and her pet-stewing antics helped make the film a massive hit. Forrest becomes more and more desperate to recapture her former lover's attention, which leads to her boiling his daughter's pet bunny on the stove.

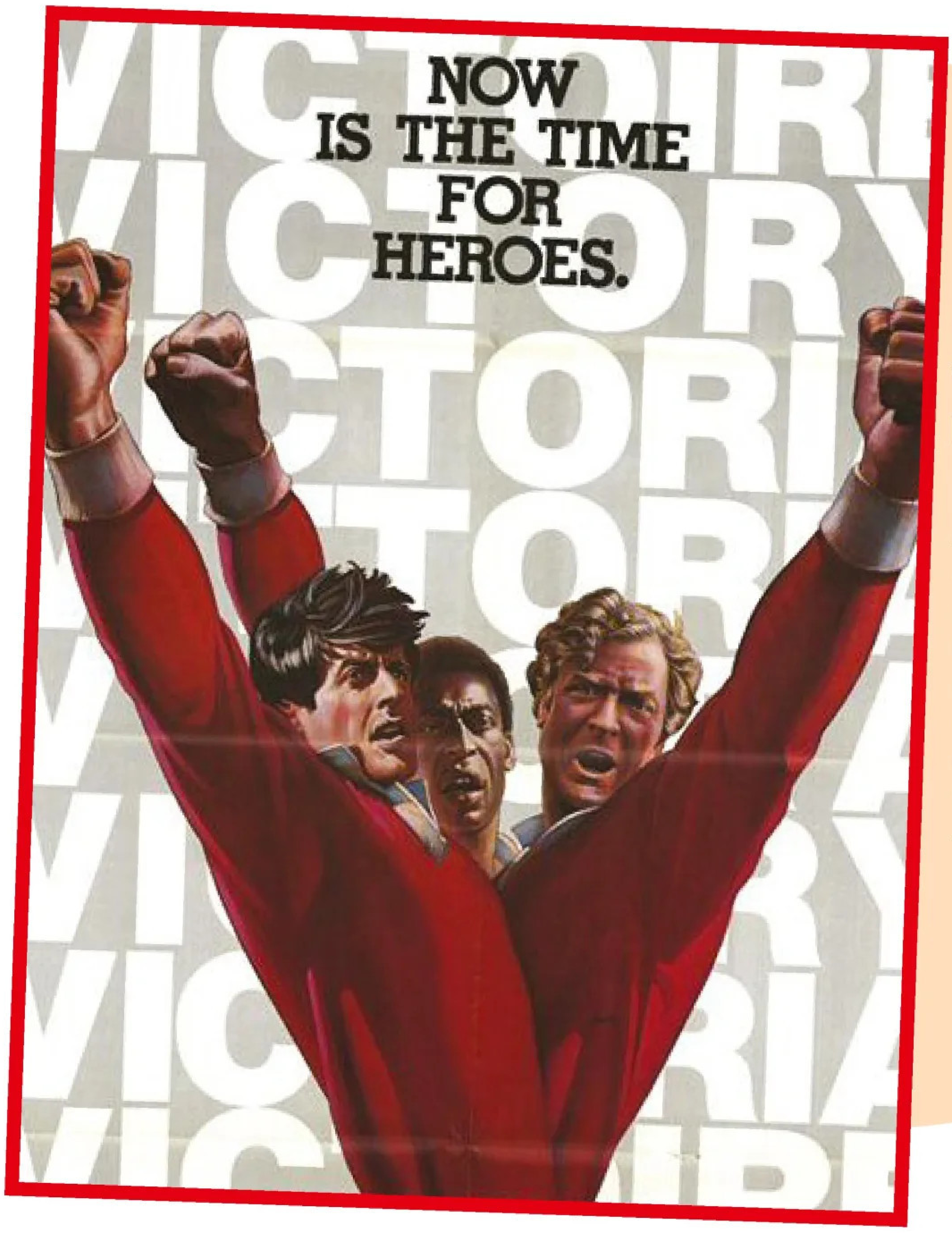

MICHAEL DOUGLAS
GLENN CLOSE
On the other side of drinks, dinner and a one night stand, lies a terrifying love story.
Fatal Attraction
ANNE ARCHER
A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

## Full Metal Jacket

1987

**56** *Full Metal Jacket* wasn't a huge hit with critics or cinema-goers on its initial release, but Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam film arguably had the greatest opening scene of any war movie. Gunnery Sergeant Hartman screaming at his troops became the standout moment, his raw intensity leaving its mark on everyone who watched it.


IN VIETNAM THE WIND DOESN'T BLOW IT SUCKS
BORN TO KILL
Stanley Kubrick's
FULL METAL JACKET


NOW IS THE TIME FOR HEROES.
VICTORY

## Escape To Victory

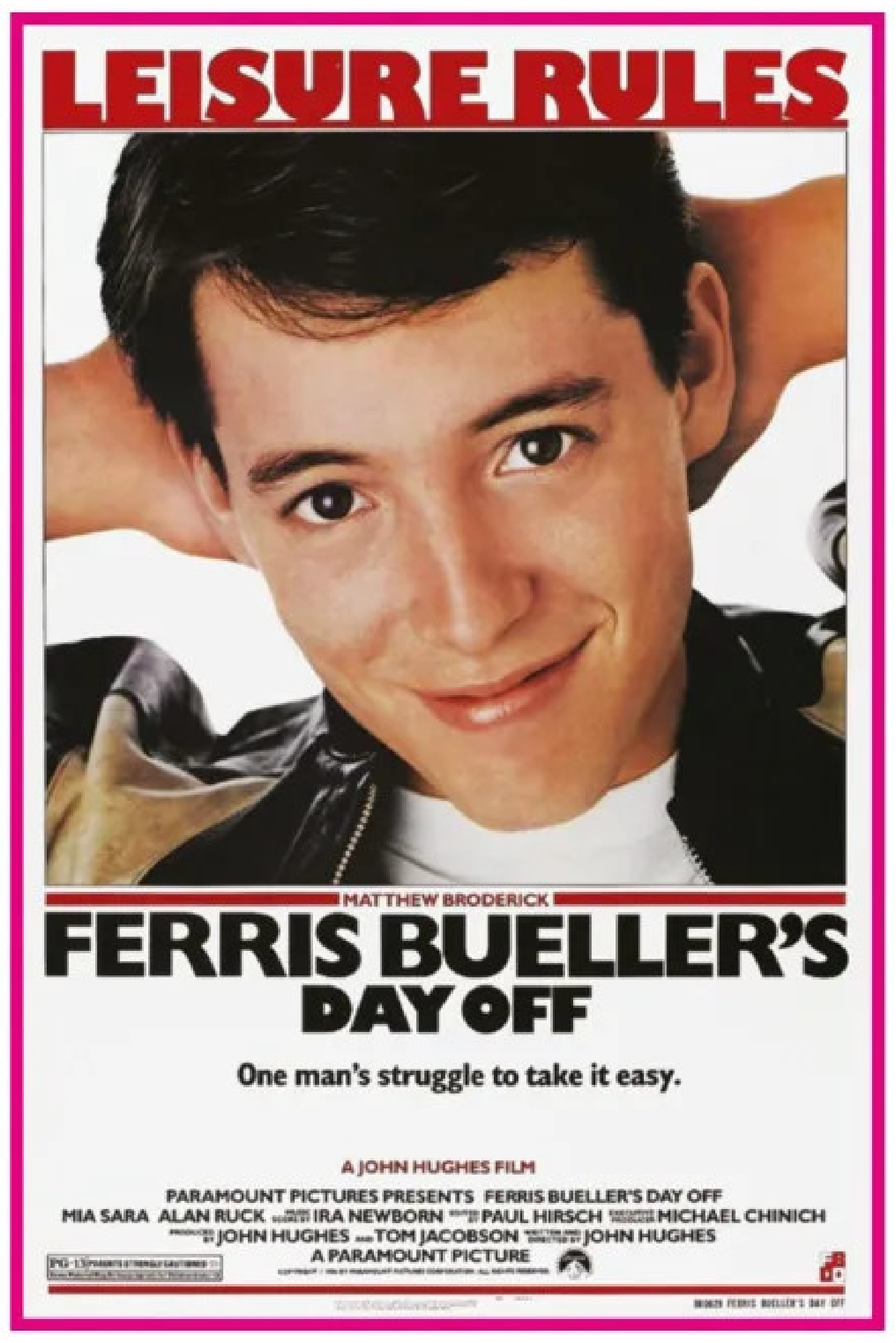
1981

**57** It's harder to think of any film that has brought so many conflicting elements together. Michael Caine, Sylvester Stallone and Pele team up as prisoners of war, playing a football match as cover for a POW escape attempt. It's quirky and oddly charming, just because it's so different.

## Ferris Bueller's Day Off

1986

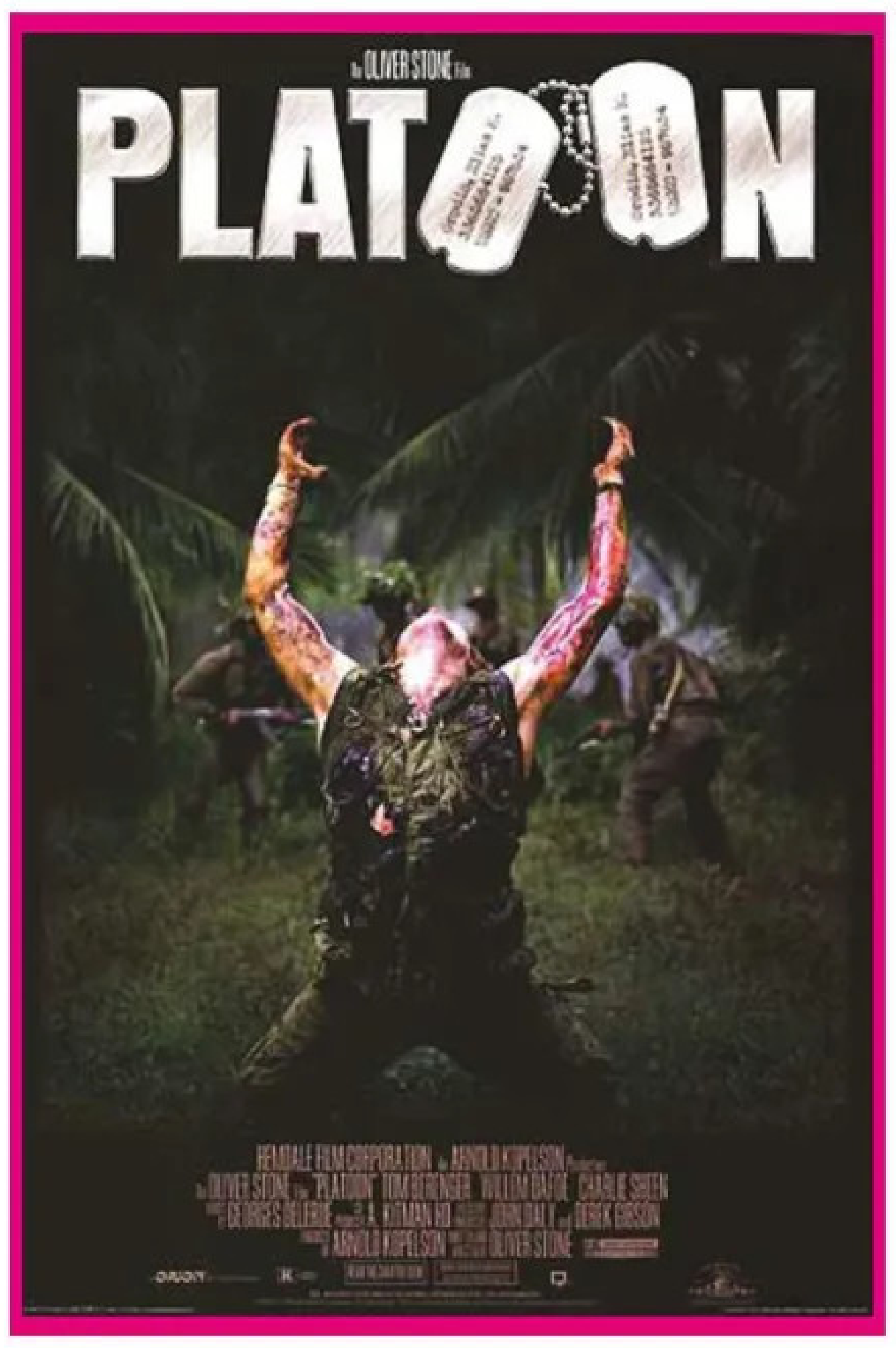
**58** Who'd have thought that someone having a day off school could be so much fun? The young Matthew Broderick was perfectly cast as slacker student Ferris, who joins a parade float and poses as 'the Sausage King of Chicago', all while avoiding the curmudgeonly Dean Rooney. Fun, cool, and care-free, Broderick was the student we all wanted to be.


LEISURE RULES
MATTHEW BRODERICK
FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF
One man's struggle to take it easy.
A JOHN HUGHES FILM
A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

## Platoon

1986

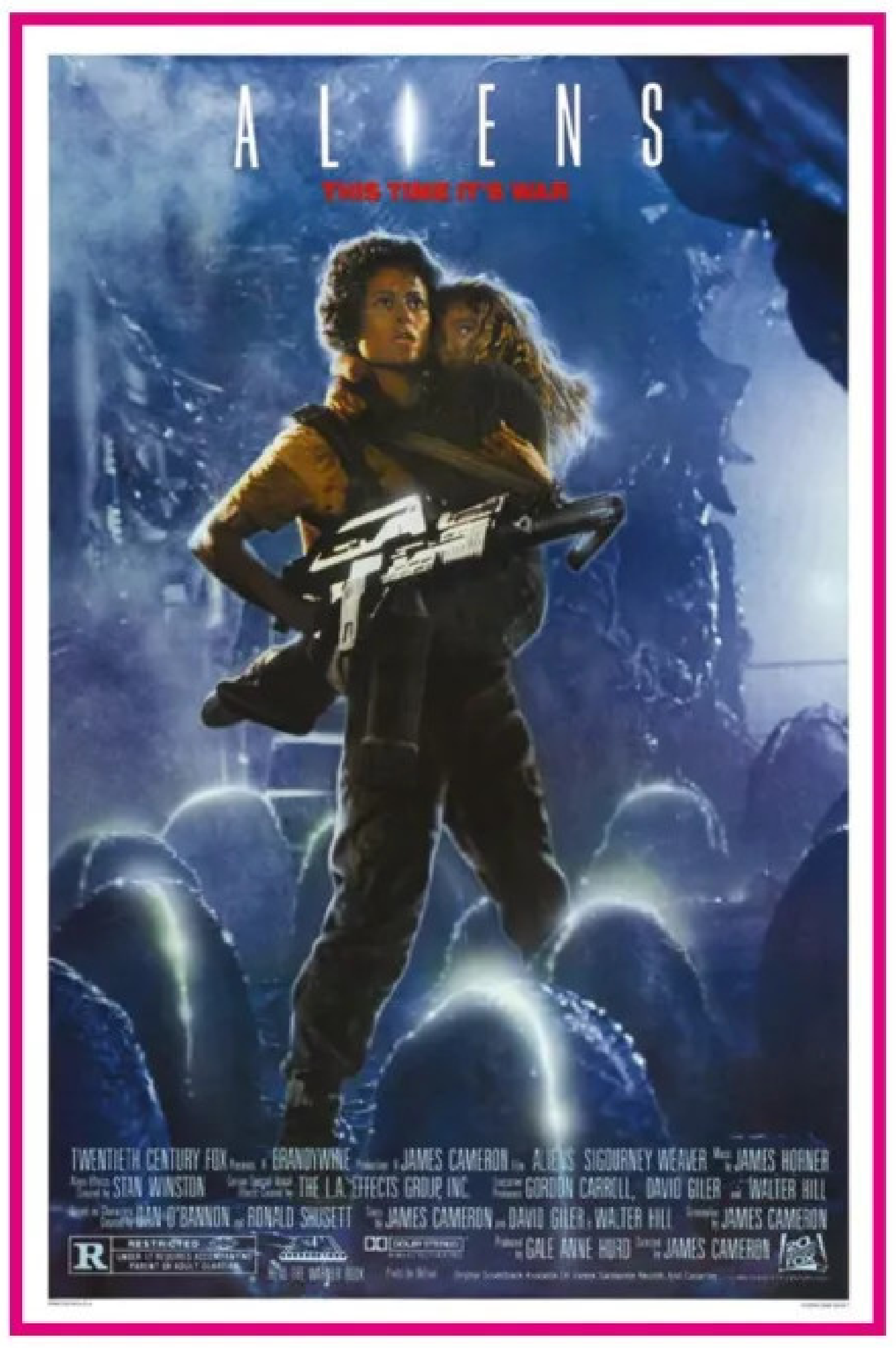
**59** Sgt. Elias's death in Platoon was one of the unforgettable images of the '80s, his arms-aloft pose being used for the posters and VHS releases. It was one of many harrowing and unforgettable scenes in Oliver Stone's brutal and uncompromising war film, which was powerful, moving and captured the fervent anti-war sentiment of the time.



## Aliens

1986

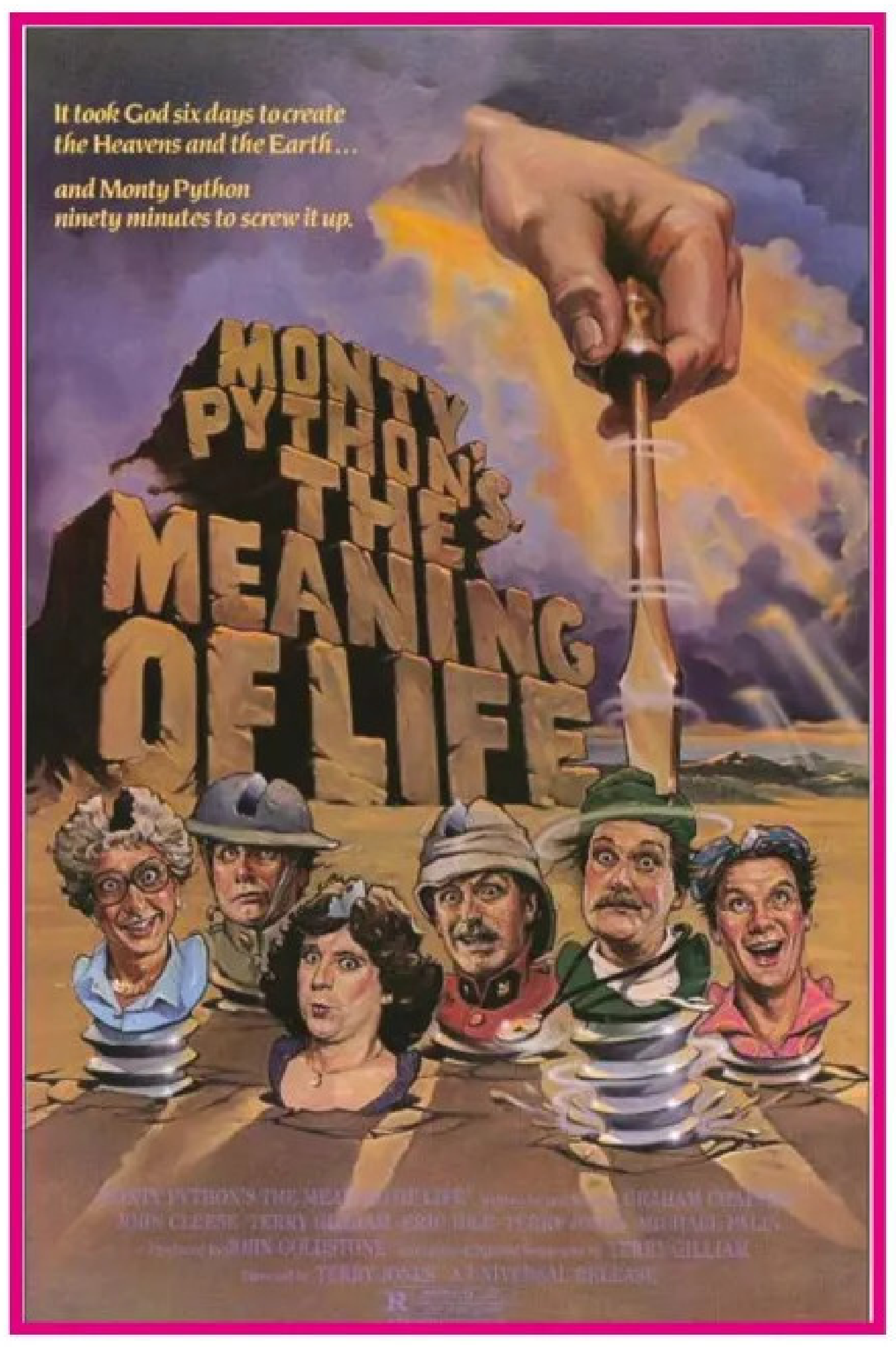
**60** After the taut horror of the original *Alien*, James Cameron ramped up the action for the sequel. Rather than one Xenomorph terrorising audiences, there were now hundreds of them, fighting the marines who had landed to investigate Hadleys Hope. The ominous beeping of the motion tracker from *Aliens* has become movie legend.



## Monty Python's The Meaning Of Life

1983

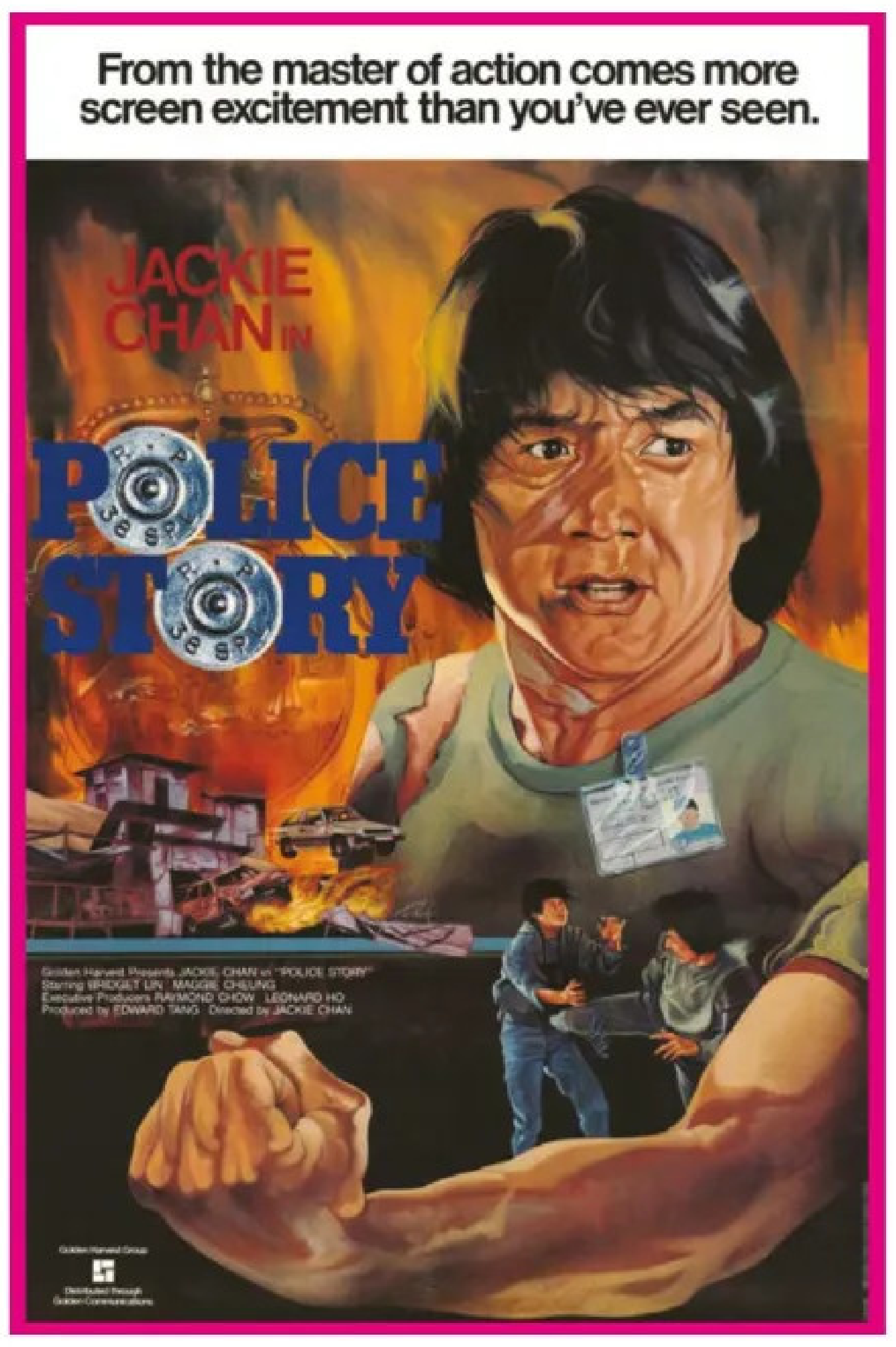
**61** Monty Python's work was well known by 1983, as their surreal brand of humour across film and television made them world famous. But their final film, *The Meaning Of Life*, was a surprisingly dark turn for the comedy group, a series of sketches that were firmly rooted in black humour.

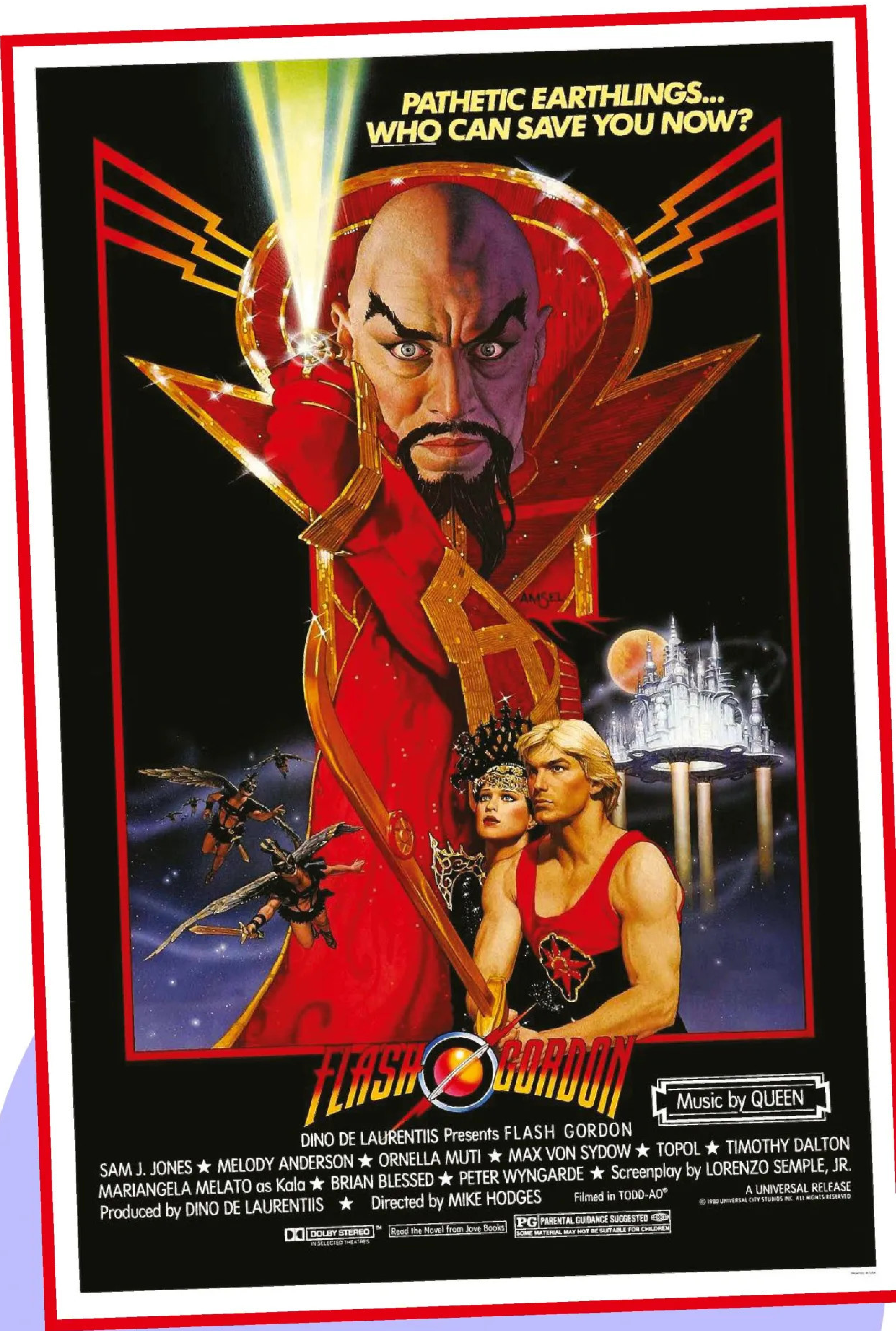

It took God six days to create the Heavens and the Earth…
and Monty Python ninety minutes to screw it up.
MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE

## Police Story

1985

**62** Through low-quality VHS tapes, those in the know had begun to spread word about a Hong Kong action star called Jackie Chan, famed for his on-screen charisma, fighting skills and death-defying stunts. *Police Story* became the go-to movie for those fans wanting to show off this new action star they had discovered, with amazing stunts that put many Western films to shame.


From the master of action comes more screen excitement than you've ever seen.
JACKIE CHAN in
POLICE STORY


PATHETIC EARTHLINGS... WHO CAN SAVE YOU NOW?
FLASH GORDON
Music by QUEEN
DINO DE LAURENTIIS Presents FLASH GORDON
SAM J. JONES ★ MELODY ANDERSON ★ ORNELLA MUTI ★ MAX VON SYDOW ★ TOPOL ★ TIMOTHY DALTON
MARIANGELA MELATO as Kala ★ BRIAN BLESSED ★ PETER WYNGARDE ★ Screenplay by LORENZO SEMPLE, JR.
Produced by DINO DE LAURENTIIS ★ Directed by MIKE HODGES
Filmed in TODD-AO
A UNIVERSAL RELEASE

## Flash Gordon ▲

1980

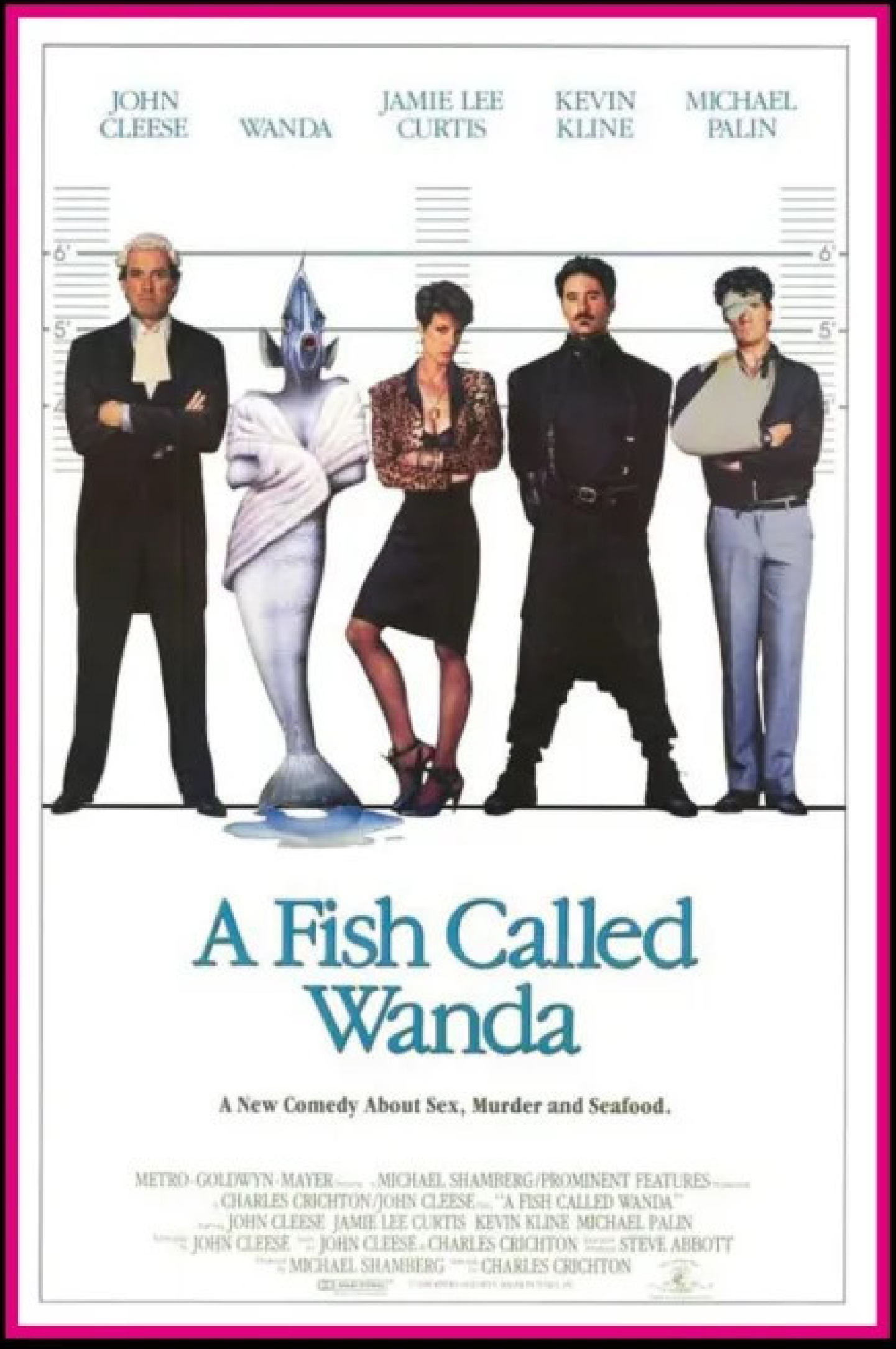
**63** Nothing did campy, kitsch sci-fi in the '80s as well as *Flash Gordon*. From the Spandex outfits to the Queen soundtrack to Brian Blessed's bellowing, this is a film that oozes fun from every pore and seems to almost enjoy how ridiculous it is.

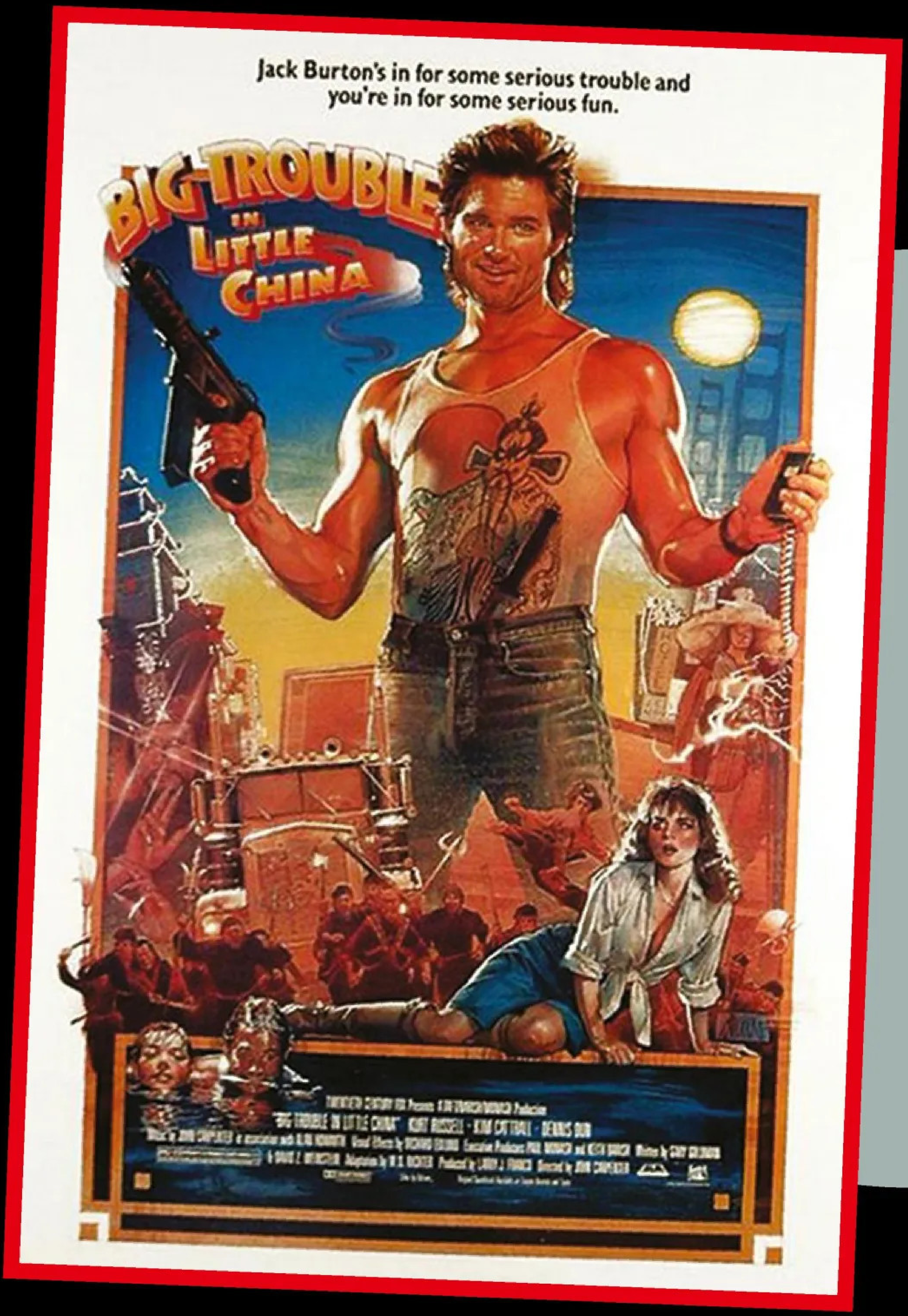
> ***"A film that oozes fun from every pore and seems to almost enjoy how ridiculous it is"***

## A Fish Called Wanda

1988

**64** An unusual crossover of British and American talents, *A Fish Called Wanda* saw John Cleese, Michael Palin and Kevin Kline star as diamond thieves trying to double-cross one another. The comedy became a huge hit on both sides of the Atlantic, eventually leading to a sequel almost a decade later called *Fierce Creatures.*


JOHN CLEESE
WANDA
JAMIE LEE CURTIS
KEVIN KLINE
MICHAEL PALIN
A Fish Called Wanda
A New Comedy About Sex, Murder and Seafood.


Jack Burton's in for some serious trouble and you're in for some serious fun.
BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

## Big Trouble In Little China

1986

**65** A cult classic of the '80s, *Big Trouble In Little China* brings the best of Western cowboy movies and martial arts flicks together. It's bursting with more ideas and creativity in a single scene than most films manage in their entire running time, all anchored by Kurt Russell's charisma and charm.

## Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan

1982

**66** *Star Trek* had already made its big screen debut in 1979, but the sequel heralded a new age in special effects, with the first completely computer-generated sequence created by ILM. The film also gave us William Shatner's legendary scream of "Khaaaan!", so that's two iconic movie moments found here.

At the end of the universe lies the beginning of vengeance.
STAR TREK II THE WRATH OF KHAN

## My Neighbor Totoro

1988

**67** Although it wouldn't become a Western hit until many years later, *My Neighbor Totoro* proved that Hayao Miyazaki's animation wizardry took root in the '80s. From Catbus to Totoro itself, this magical film was full of memorable characters and creatures that lingered in the mind long after the credits rolled.

忘れものを、届けにきました。
となりのトトロ

## The Killer

1989

**68** John Woo would become a household name with Western films like *Face/Off* and *Broken Arrow*, but his name first appeared on our radar with *The Killer*. In stark contrast to the blunt force fury of most action films, *The Killer* opted for cool style and panache instead, giving genre fans a choice of which type they wanted to watch.

## Bloodsport

1988

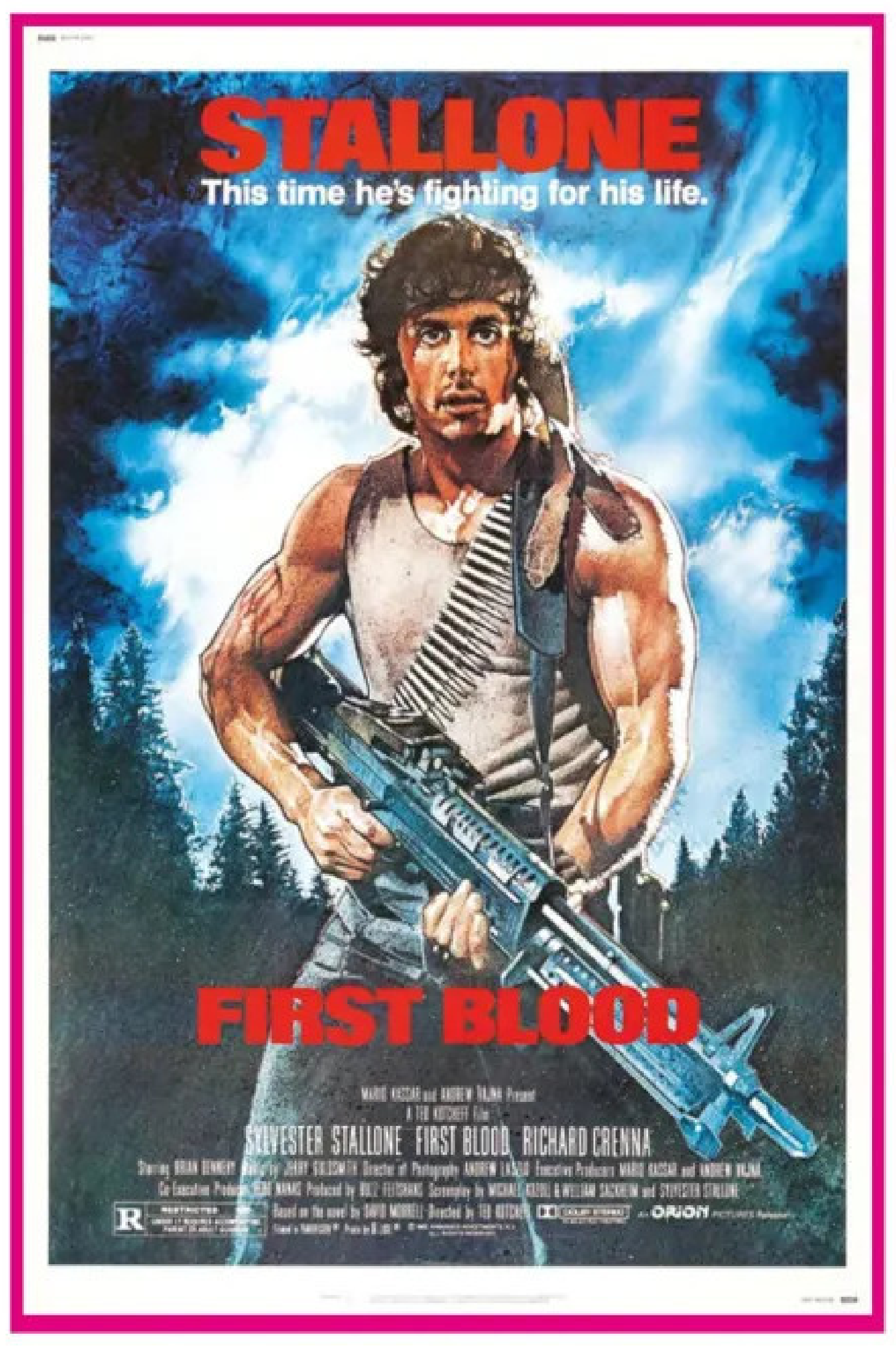
**69** With underground martial arts becoming bigger in the '80s, Western directors were eventually drawn to the blossoming genre. It was one of those early Western takes on the genre that gave rise to a brand new star – a Belgian martial artist called Jean-Claude Van Damme, who kicked and punched his way through *Bloodsport.*

STARRING INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS SENSATION JEAN CLAUDE VAN DAMME
The secret contest where the world's greatest warriors fight in a battle to the death.
Bloodsport
Based on a true story.

## First Blood

1982

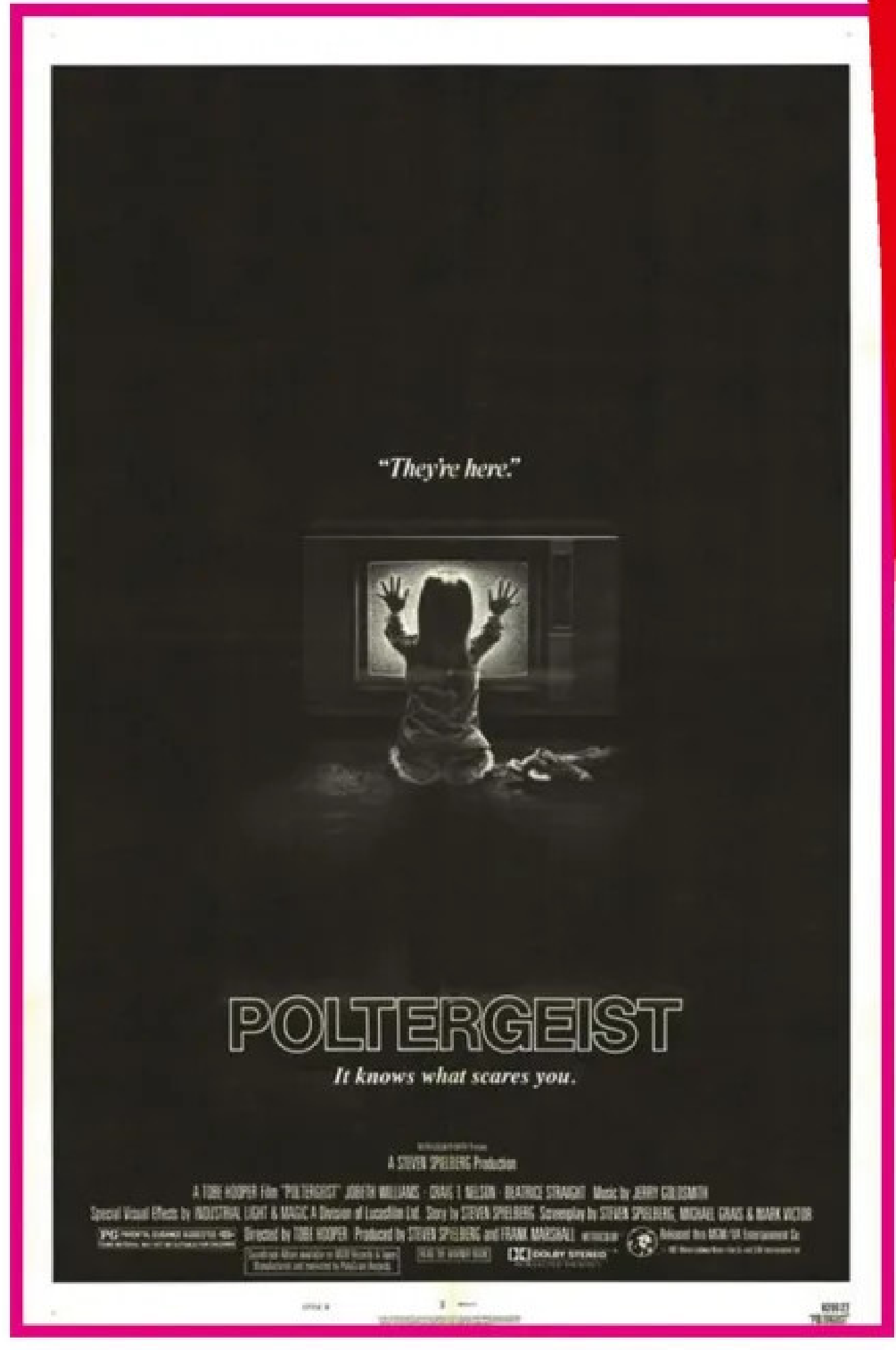
**70** The *Rambo* series would later reposition itself as the home of OTT action blockbusters, but *First Blood* stands in stark contrast to its sequels. A deep and dark examination of the tortured psyche of a Vietnam veteran who has returned home, the plight of Sylvester Stallone's chcaracter mirrored what was happening in the real world with many former American soldiers who had served in Vietnam.


STALLONE
This time he's fighting for his life.
FIRST BLOOD
ORION

## Poltergeist

1982

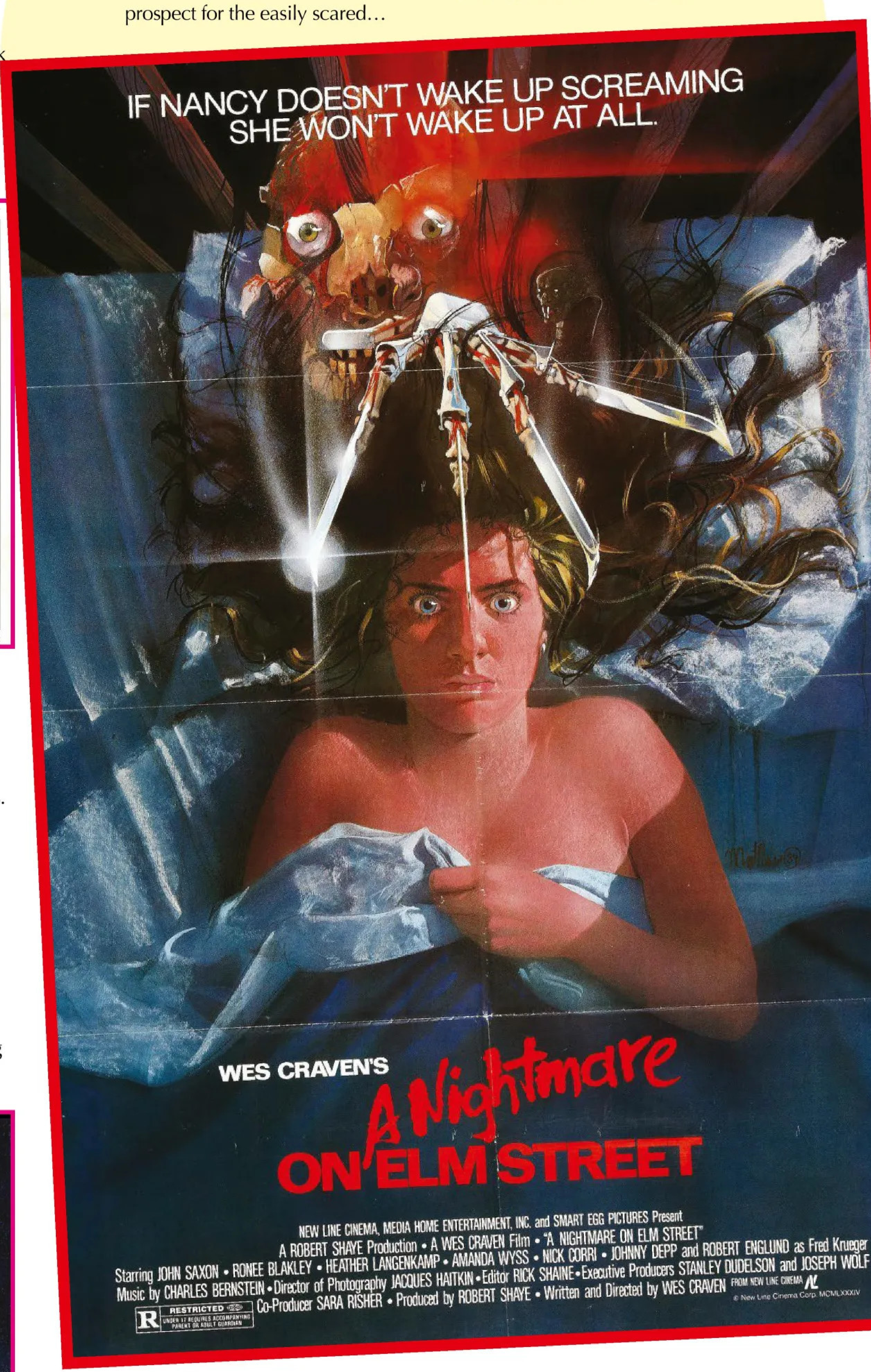
**71** A stormy night. A room full of clown dolls. A scared boy holding a torch. A wind-up string returning to its doll as a menacing ditty plays… if you've seen *Poltergeist*, you know what happens next. The clown leaping out at the screen in a terrifying, toothy attack was one of, if not the, scariest scene of the '80s, and helped secure Tobe Hooper's film as a horror classic.


"They're here."
POLTERGEIST
It knows what scares you.

## A Nightmare On Elm Street

1984

**72** While Japanese horror *Ringu* spooked modern audiences by breaking the fourth wall – watch this movie and you'll be cursed to die – *A Nightmare On Elm Street* was the first to leave lingering fear when the credits stopped rolling. Freddy Krueger killed his victims in their dreams, making going to sleep a terrifying prospect for the easily scared…

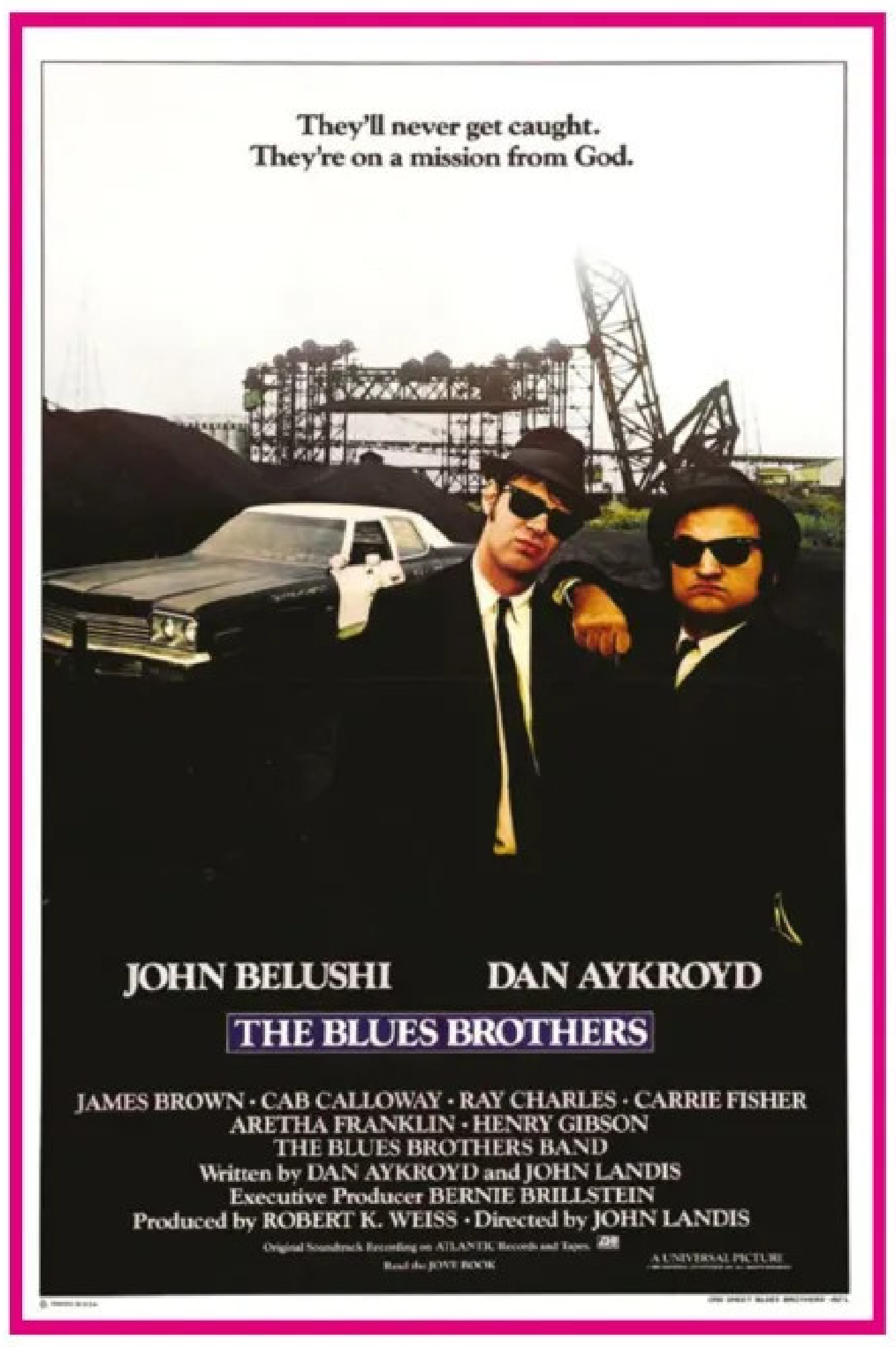

IF NANCY DOESN'T WAKE UP SCREAMING
SHE WON'T WAKE UP AT ALL.
WES CRAVEN'S
A Nightmare
ON ELM STREET
NEW LINE CINEMA, MEDIA HOME ENTERTAINMENT, INC. and SMART EGG PICTURES Present
A ROBERT SHAYE Production • A WES CRAVEN Film • "A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET"
Starring JOHN SAXON • RONEE BLAKLEY • HEATHER LANGENKAMP • AMANDA WYSS • NICK CORRI • JOHNNY DEPP and ROBERT ENGLUND as Fred Krueger
Music by CHARLES BERNSTEIN • Director of Photography JACQUES HAITKIN • Editor RICK SHAINE • Executive Producers STANLEY DUDELSON and JOSEPH WOLF
Co-Producer SARA RISHER • Produced by ROBERT SHAYE • Written and Directed by WES CRAVEN
R RESTRICTED

> **"Freddy Krueger killed his victims in their dreams, making going to sleep a terrifying prospect"**

## The Blues Brothers

1980

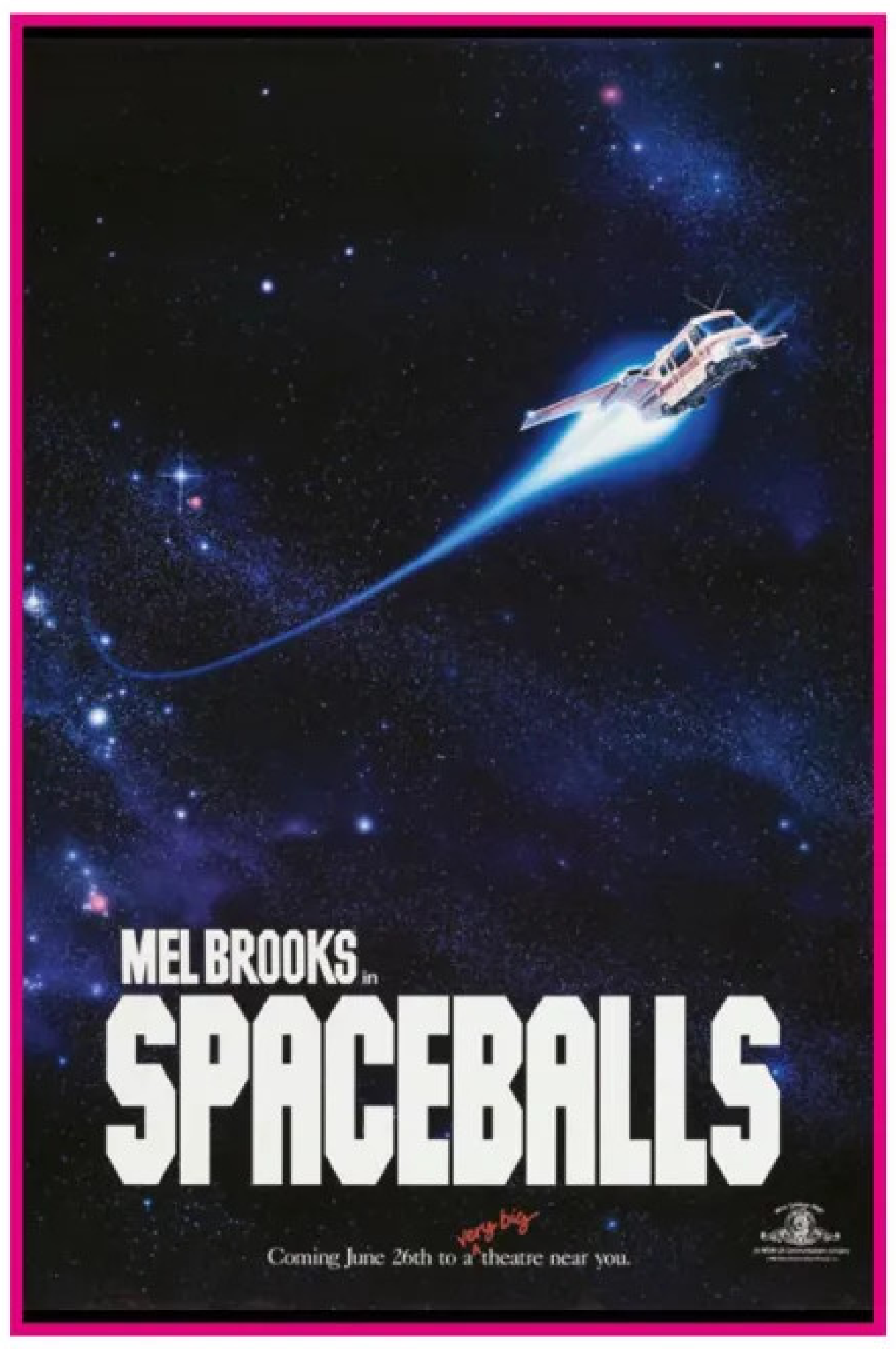
**73** The Blues Brothers started life on US TV sketch show *Saturday Night Live*, but it was their big-screen debut that brought them to a global audience. The swagger and style marked *The Blues Brothers* out as a comedy with a difference, so it was little surprise that it overcame its humble TV roots to become a massive hit.


They'll never get caught.
They're on a mission from God.
JOHN BELUSHI
DAN AYKROYD
THE BLUES BROTHERS

## Spaceballs

1987

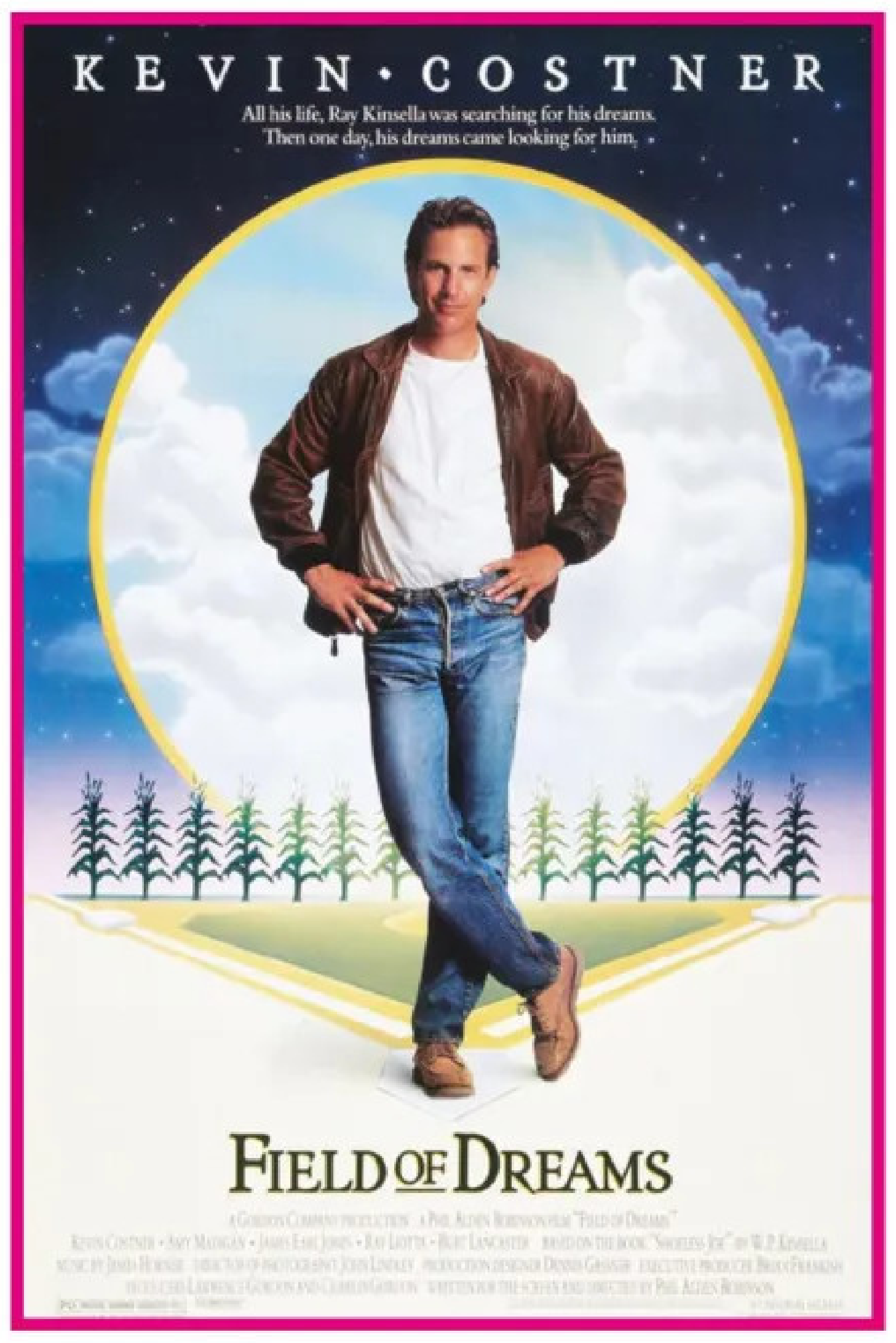
**74** *Spaceballs* is a perfect snapshot of '80s movies. It was a parody of sci-fi juggernauts like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, but also found room to send up *Aliens, Police Academy, Rambo, Rocky* and *Back To The Future*, among others. It's also a hilarious film in its own right, its 100-jokes-per-minute pace ensuring there's always something to laugh at.

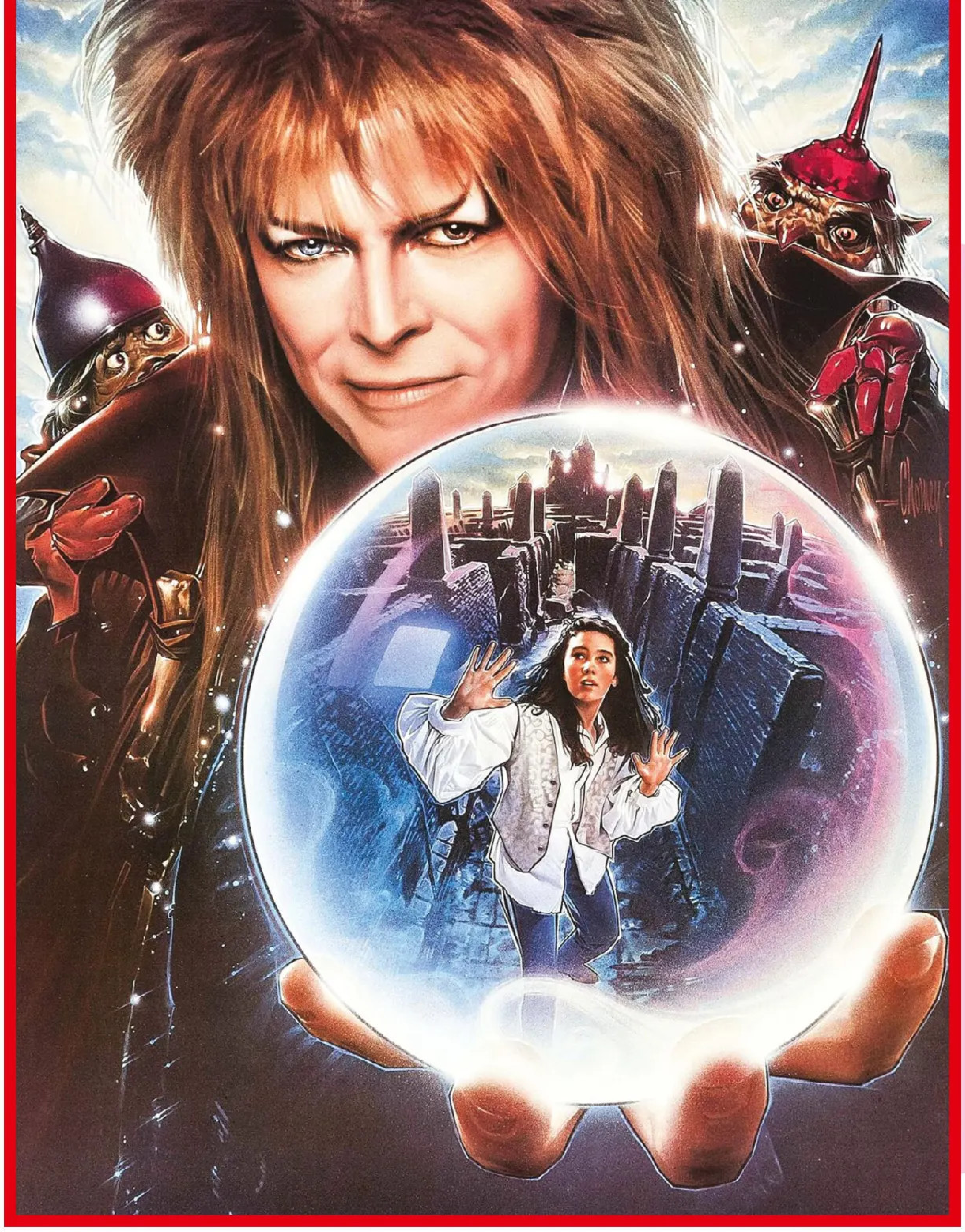

MEL BROOKS
SPACEBALLS
Coming June 26th to a theatre near you.

## Field of Dreams

1989

**75** "If you build it, he will come" – a famous line that has been misquoted (and parodied) endlessly ever since the release of *Field of Dreams*. This Kevin Costner film about a farmer's dream to build a baseball field is a sentimental flick about making the impossible come true, rather than a typical sports movie. It's heavy on the schmaltz, but we challenge you hold back the tears throughout.


KEVIN·COSTNER
All his life, Ray Kinsella was searching for his dreams. Then one day, his dreams came looking for him.
FIELD OF DREAMS



## Labyrinth

1986

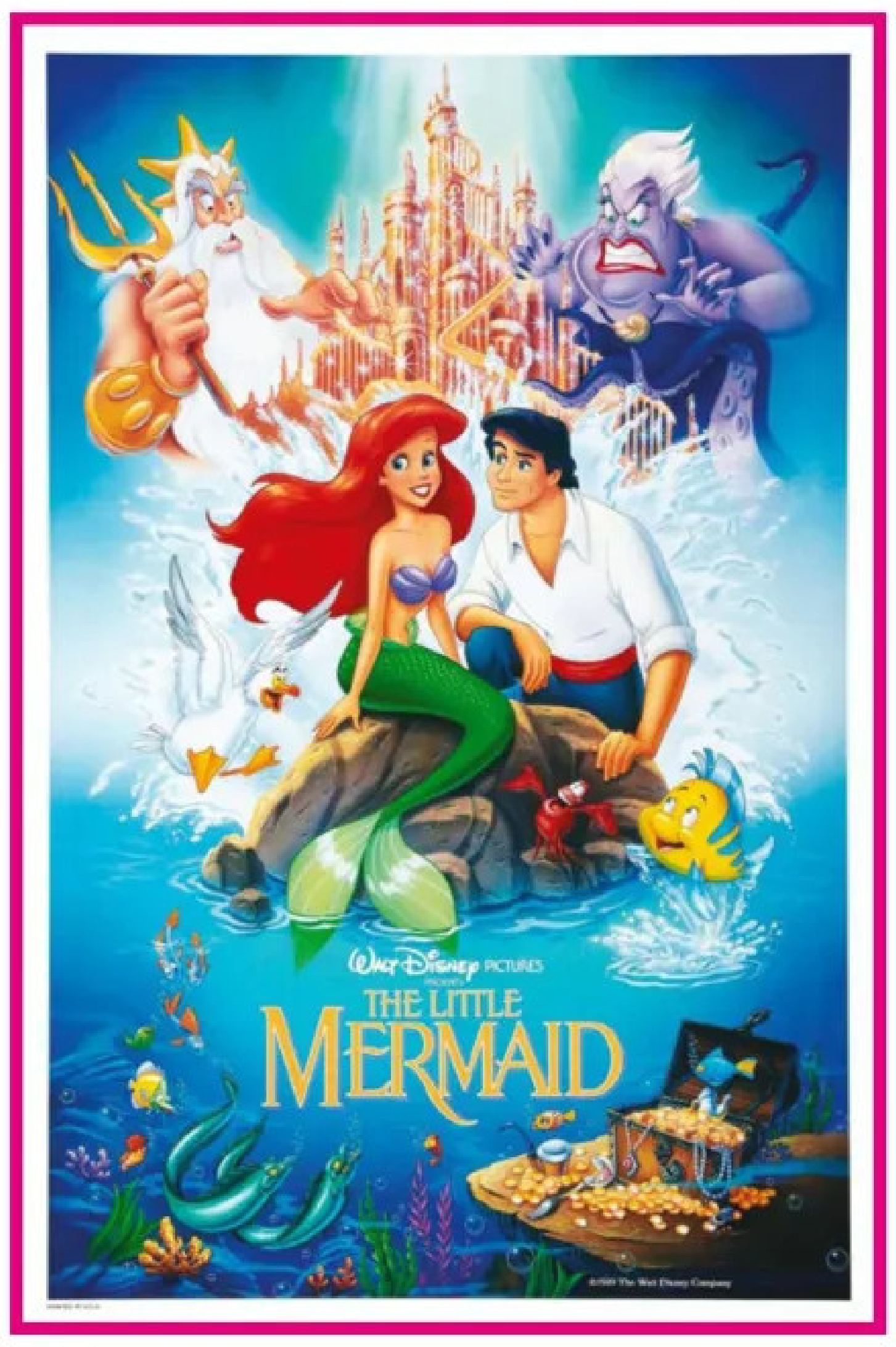
**76** Although *Labyrinth* wasn't David Bowie's first foray into the world of acting, it remains his most memorable. *Labyrinth*'s eccentric mix of fantasy, music, puppetry and adventure was the perfect place for the charismatic singer to shine, playing the wild-haired Goblin King.

◄

## The Little Mermaid

1989

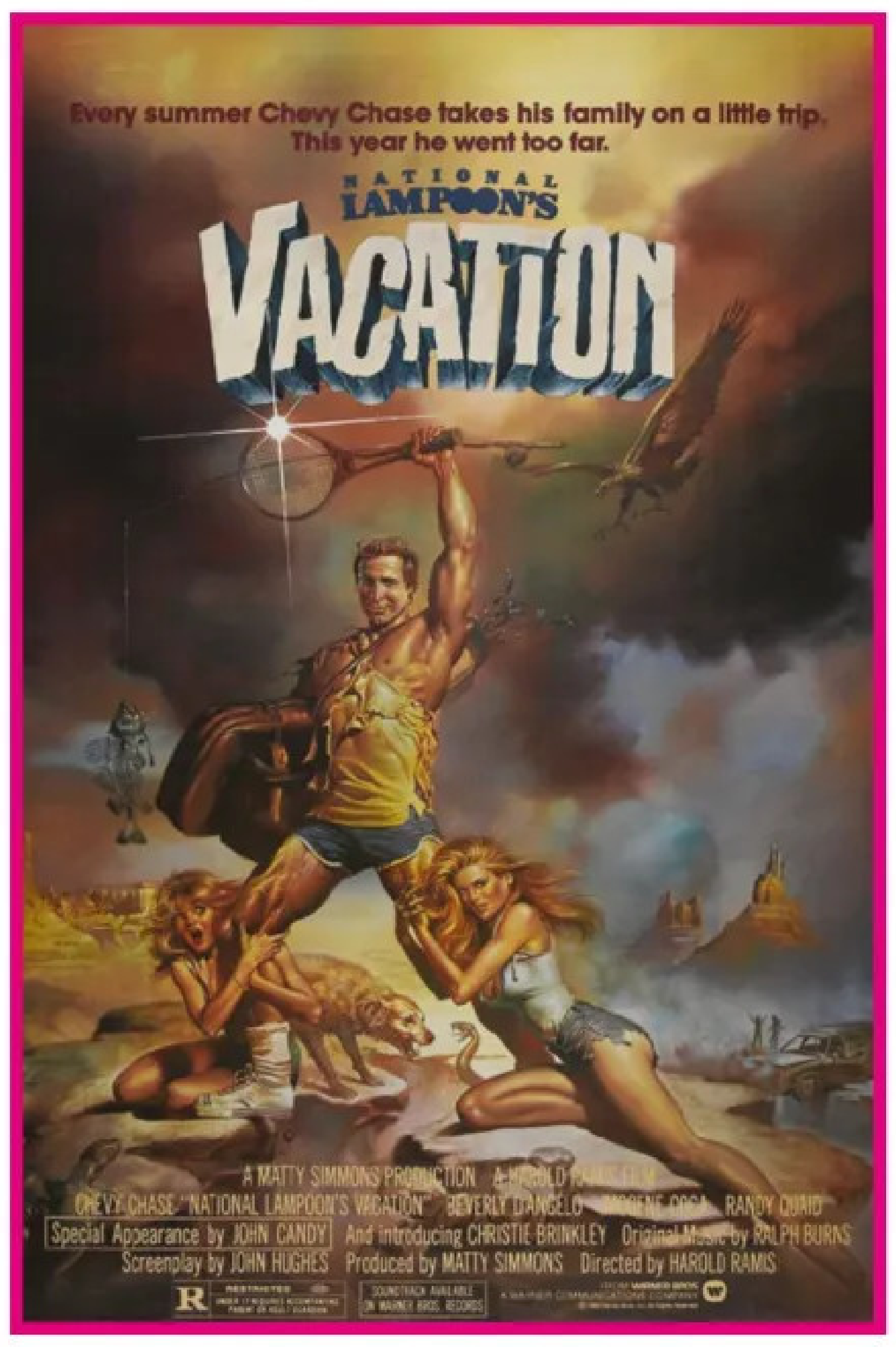
**77** From the catchy *Under the Sea* ditty to the skittish rantings of Sebastian the crab, *The Little Mermaid* is a film that's buzzing with fun and radiates joy. It was Disney's biggest hit in the '80s by far and helped kick-start a new golden age for the company, as almost all young girls everywhere fell in love with Ariel's adventures.


Walt Disney Pictures
THE LITTLE MERMAID

## National Lampoon's Vacation

1983

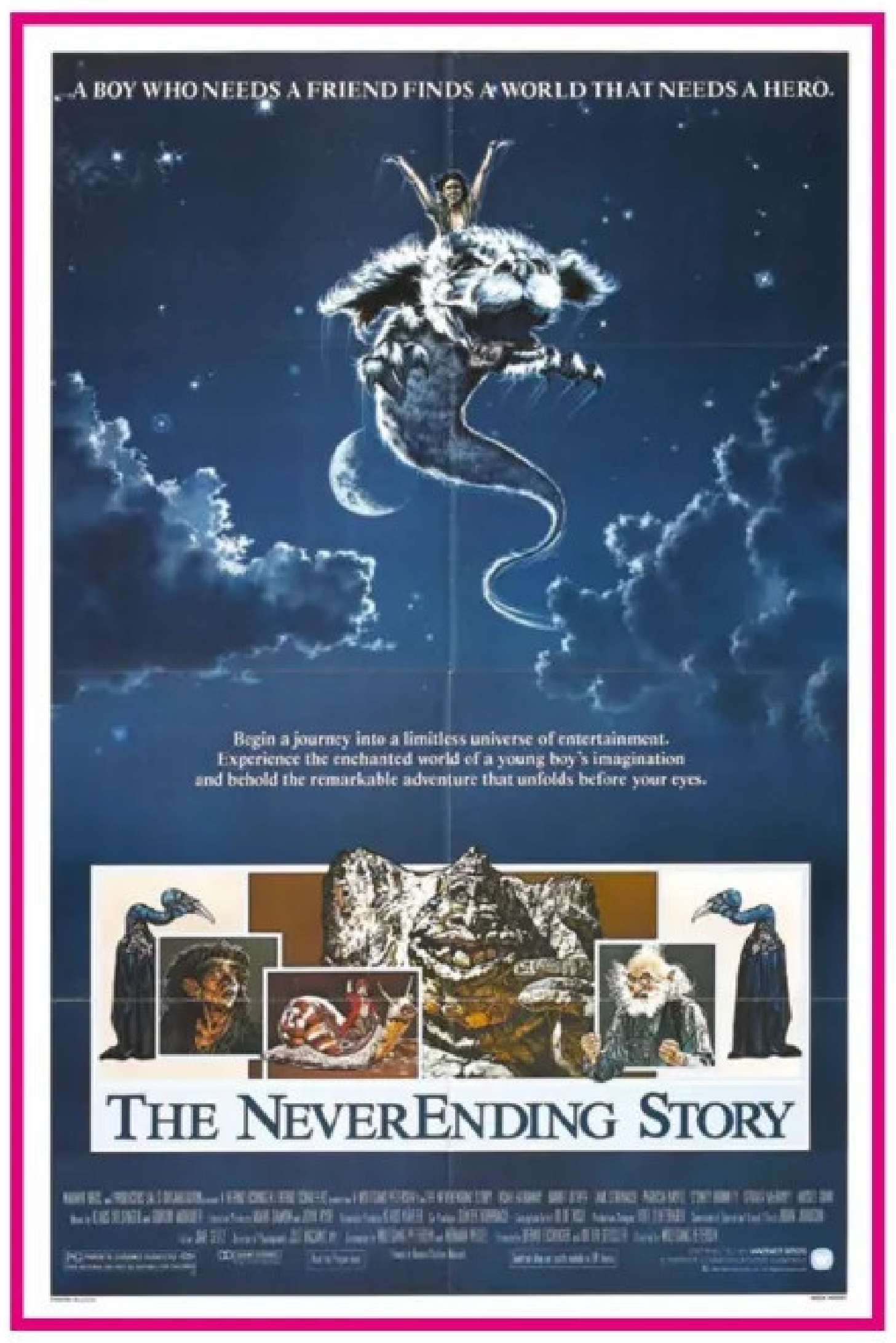
**78** Chevy Chase was arguably the biggest comedy star in the world in 1983, and *National Lampoon's Vacation* was a vehicle written especially for him. The jokes come thick and fast, all making the most of Chase's slapstick humour and brilliant comedy timing.


Every summer Chevy Chase takes his family on a little trip. This year he went too far.
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S
VACATION

## The NeverEnding Story

1984

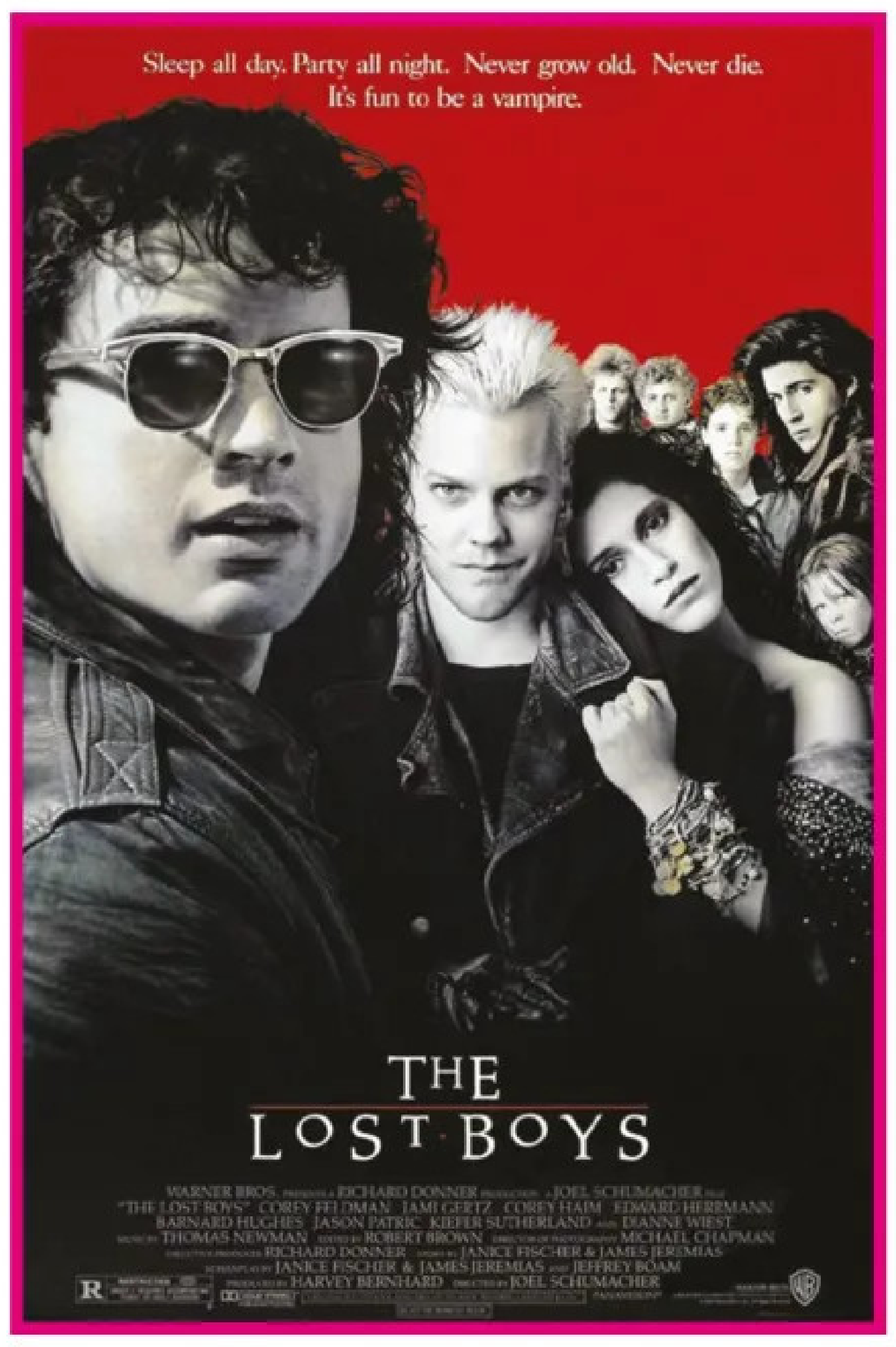
**79** The perfect whirlwind of high fantasy, dizzying ambition, and practical effects combined for an unforgettable story (which, despite its name, only lasted 93 minutes). Who can forget the sight of luckdragon Falkor soaring among the stars?


A BOY WHO NEEDS A FRIEND FINDS A WORLD THAT NEEDS A HERO.
THE NEVERENDING STORY

## The Lost Boys

1987

**80** The movie that made Kiefer Sutherland, Corey Haim and Corey Feldman superstars. It wasn't just the young friends vs vampires plot that did it either. Rather, it was the swagger and wild streak of style running through *The Lost Boys* that made them stand out, their bleached hair and oversized leather jackets demanding attention.


Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old. Never die. It's fun to be a vampire.
THE LOST BOYS

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Rubik's Brand
**First released:** 1980
**Expect to pay:** £10.99

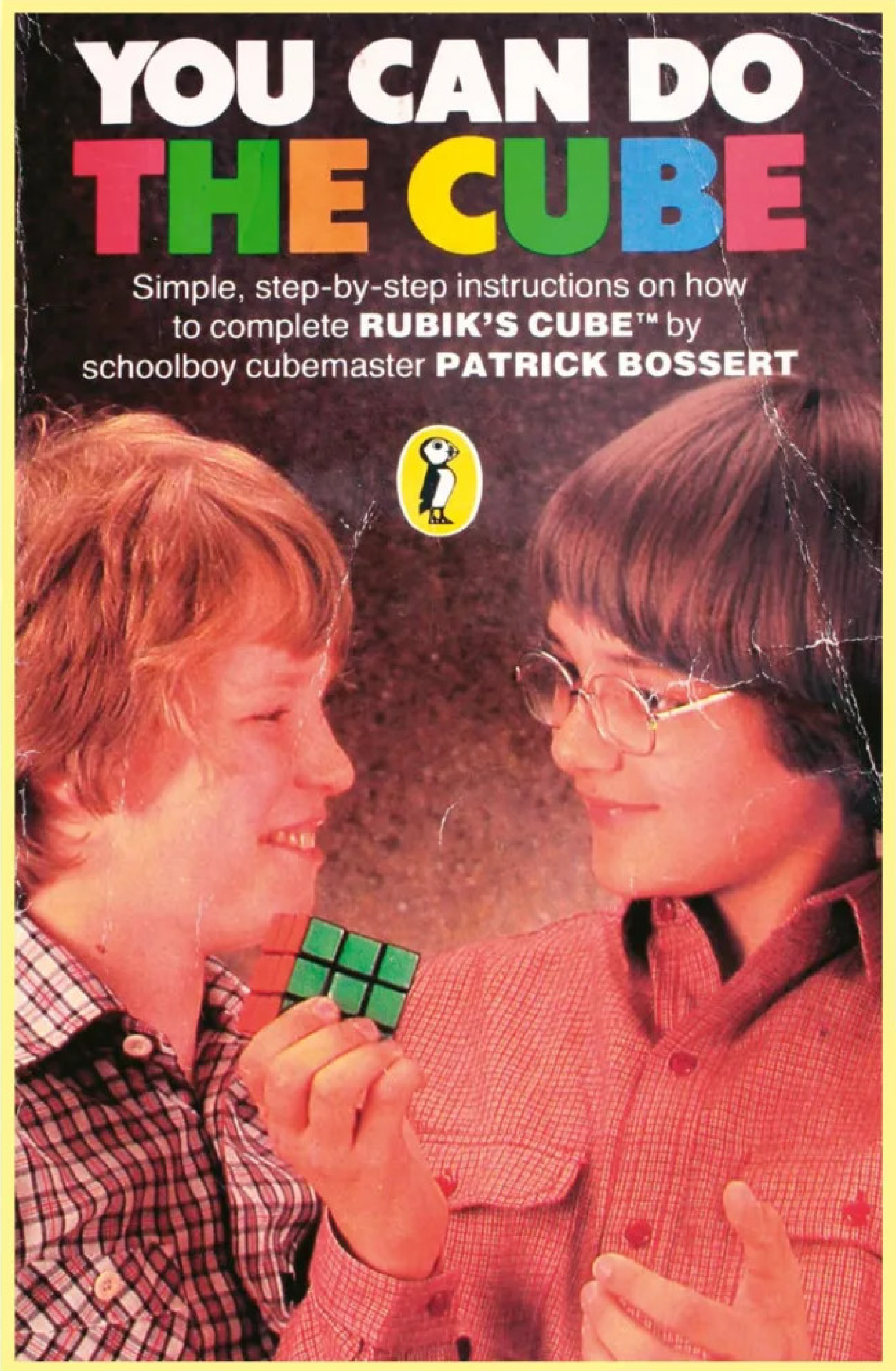
# RUBIK'S CUBE

Like some of the greatest inventions in history, the Rubik's Cube was something of a happy accident. Its creator, Hungarian professor Ern´´o Rubik, built the three-by-three cube in the '70s as a learning tool for his students. He wanted to show them an object where all the parts could be moved independently without the entire structure falling apart. It was only when Rubik scrambled his cube that he realised the difficulty trying to restore it back to its original order – thus, with the addition of coloured panels, the Rubik's Cube was born.

Or rather, the Magic Cube was born. That's what Rubik first named his creation in 1975 when it was sold in toy shops around Budapest. As its popularity grew, the toy earned international attention and after spotting its potential at a German toy fair in early 1979, Ideal Toys signed a deal to sell the puzzle in the West. Just one year later, the rebranded Rubik's Cube hit the shelves. Sales exploded following TV adverts and it blossomed from simple toy to cultural craze.

The difficulty in solving the puzzle led to speedcubing tournaments, while books on how to solve the cube became bestsellers. It won awards for its simple but engaging design, as cube owners worldwide tried to click their way around the puzzle, matching up all the coloured tiles. It was frustrating but strangely addictive, as you felt there was a technique you hadn't quite learned yet, a solution you hadn't quite stumbled upon. As such, the sight of a scrambled Rubik's Cube on household shelves became one of the iconic images of the '80s.

▲ The most 'common' solution to the cube involves solving it layer by layer. The 'top' layer is solved first, followed by the middle layer, then the final remaining layer.



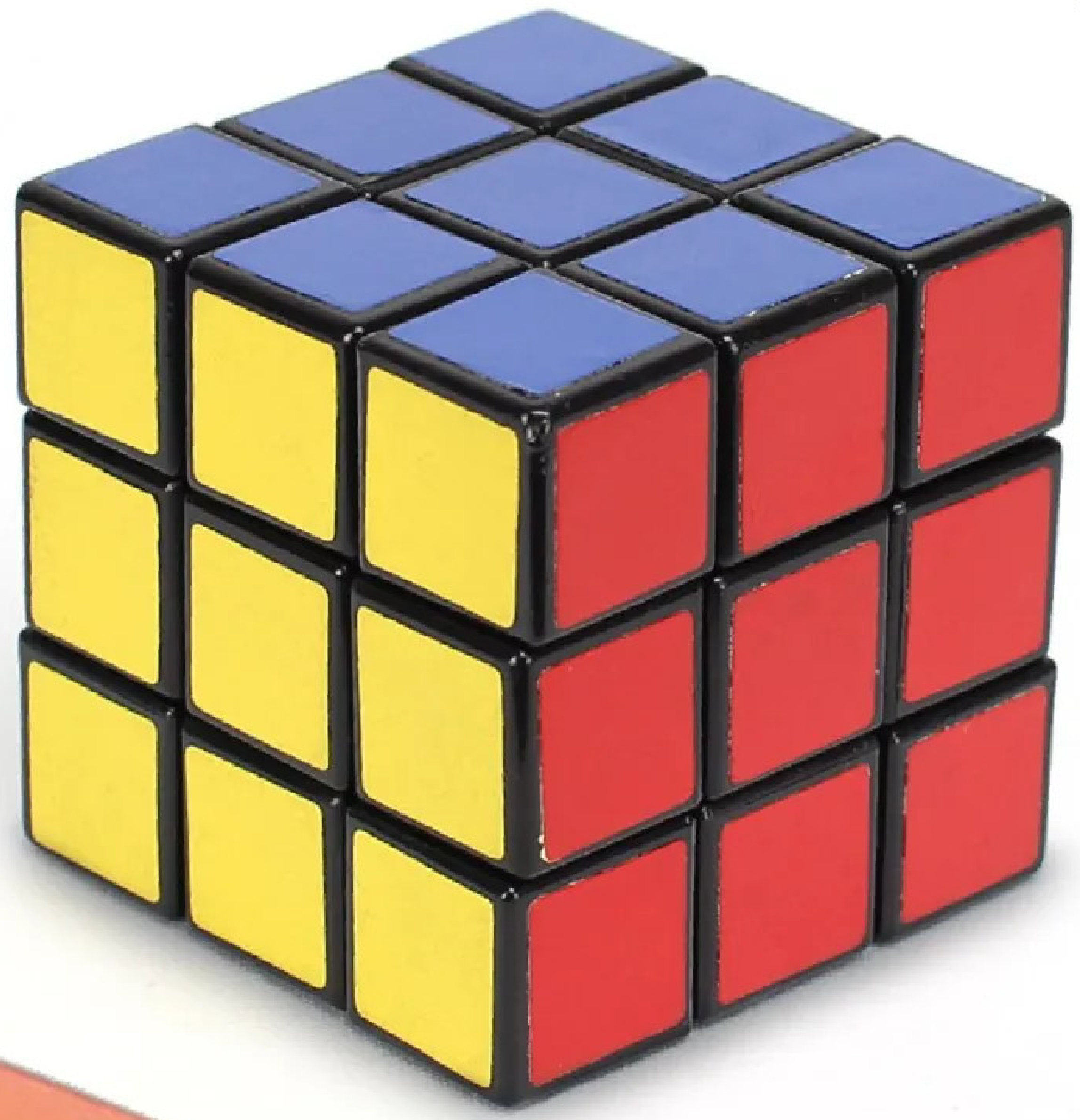
YOU CAN DO
THE CUBE
Simple, step-by-step instructions on how to complete **RUBIK'S CUBE™** by schoolboy cubemaster **PATRICK BOSSERT**

© Alamy/Retromash.com

## THE LEGACY

Sales of the Rubik's Cube died down in the early '80s, but experienced a surprising resurgence from 2000 onwards, when the patent expired and other brands of cubes began to hit the market. The 2003 World Rubik's Games Championships became the first speedcubing tournament in over 20 years, while the rise of YouTube and video tutorials helped keep the speedcubing community active many years later. It's been estimated over 350 million cubes have been sold worldwide.

If you wanted to cheat a Rubik's Cube, you could dismantle it without too much difficulty. Just turn the top layer by 45 degrees and then pry one of the edge cubes away from the other two layers. Reassemble it in the order you like and you could pretend you solved the cube by yourself.



The Rubik's Cube has been around for long enough now that optimised solutions have been discovered to solving it. The fastest solution requires fewer than 100 moves and with practice, the cube can consistently be solved in under one minute.

The Rubik's Cube was originally advertised as having over three billion combinations, but this is actually understating how tricky the puzzle is. There are actually 43 quintillion solutions, helping explain why so many players struggle to solve it.

## Information

**Original manufacturer:** Those Characters From Cleveland
**First released:** 1981
**Current manufacturer:** Just Play
**Current price:** £7.99 (for Care Bears Bedtime Bear)

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Care Bears, the brand was relaunched in 2002. This revamp included all-new character designs, as well as a pair of straight-to-DVD movies.

# CARE BEARS

Every child of the '80s will remember the Care Bears. The brightly coloured bears stamped their mark on popular culture by being anywhere and everywhere. Whether it was through toys in the home or their cartoon on Saturday morning TV or their many animated films, it was impossible to avoid them. But what most people don't know is that Care Bears started their journey on the front of greeting cards.

It was 1981 when the first ten Care Bears were designed for greeting cards. Just two years later, the toy line for the Care Bears was rolled out, which is when children began to really fall in love with them. The Care Bears are all distinct by their different colour and, more importantly, the 'tummy symbols' on their stomach. These symbols show their distinct personalities – Bedtime Bear had a sleeping moon on his stomach, Cheer Bear had a rainbow, Friend Bear had two flowers, and so on. Their personalities made them collectible and the best was yet to come.

The Care Bears took to TV and cinema screens, with *The Care Bears* cartoon and *The Care Bears Movie* in 1985. Both introduced us to the Care Bears' home, Care-a-Lot, along with new characters like Cozy Heart Penguin and Lotsa Heart Elephant. Outside of Disney productions, *The Care Bears Movie* became the highest-grossing animated movie of all time – not bad given their humble beginnings. But the one thing that always rang true is how much personality and charm each bear had, which is why they became one of the biggest and most-loved toys of the '80s.

Though dozens of additional Care Bears and cousins were added in the years after the brand's launch, the original line consisted of only ten Care Bears.

## THE LEGACY

Since the Care Bears' popularity peaked in the mid-'80s, the series has been relaunched multiple times. Because each toy company that has relaunched the series has wanted to make a success of it, it means that fans are spoilt for choice with toys to buy, movies to watch, and cartoons to indulge in. Care Bears have even found a home on Netflix, through the new series Care Bears and Cousins.

sinclair
C64 RULEZ!
I ♥ SPECCY
commodore 64
ZX Spectrum
STAMINA
Walk to
Push
Pull
Give
Open
Close
Read
Walk to
Pick up
What is
New Kid
Unlock
Use
Turn on
Turn off
Fix

The little room.
Items collected 000 Time 7:00am

# PLAYGROUND BATTLES

It's the longest-running debate in UK gaming, after 36 years. And we are determined to finally put the debate to rest after all this time. We speak to the experts, survey readers of Retro Gamer magazine, and examine the pros and cons of each system to definitively answer the question: Which is best: Commodore 64 or Spectrum?

## GRAPHICS

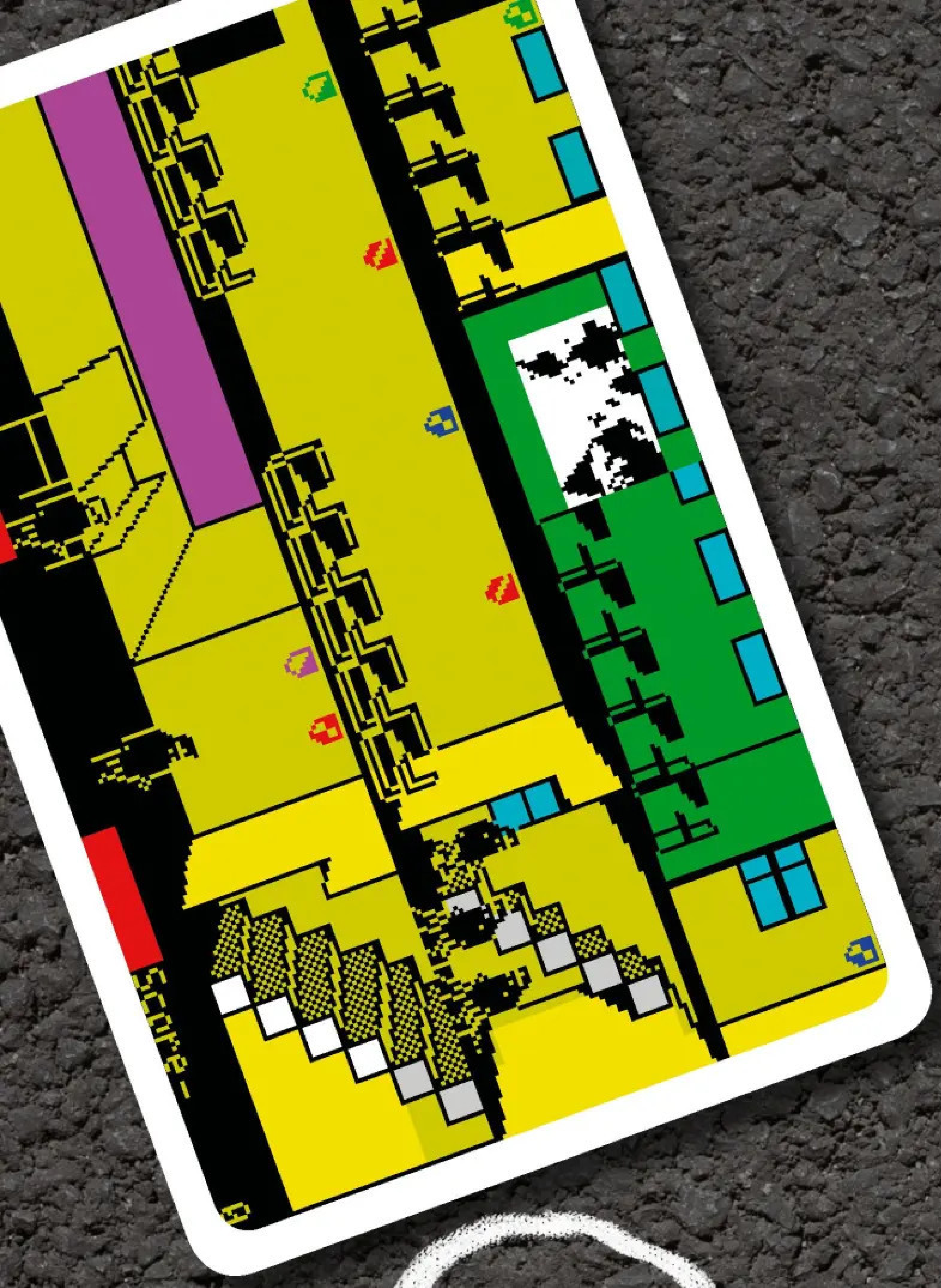
Let's be honest, right from the start. It's been 36 years since both of these venerable computers were launched and neither of them is looking like a spring chicken. If you'll allow us to put nostalgia aside for a moment, neither computer can boast the best-looking graphics in videogame history. But what's interesting is that both have their own distinct style.

The Commodore 64 suffers from a very blocky look. You can see every pixel that has gone into building up the image, and while there's a certain level of artistry to this, there's no denying that the overall look is a little like an impressionistic painting put together with Lego bricks. And in a strange palette of pastel colours, no less.

The Spectrum, on the other hand, suffered from its own set of problems, not least the infamous colour clash, which saw sprites of different colours change to an unintended hue whenever they passed over each other. The general solution to this was to render each screen in a single colour to avoid clash, but this, of course, gave Spectrum games a monochrome look that contradicted the name of the system and certainly looked a little primitive next to other 8-bit systems.

Charles Cecil, creator of *Broken Sword*, worked for both US Gold and Activision toward the peak of the 8-bit computer era and had extensive experience with both titans of the '80s. "While the Commodore 64 was technically more powerful, the hardware sprite limitations made the games feel less exciting," Cecil says. "The Spectrum may have been prone to attribute problems, but it could fill the screen with vibrant colours. Developers like Ultimate Play The Game pushed the Spectrum to the limit with their visual, as well as gameplay, masterpieces."

Ste Pickford, one half of the Pickford brothers and co-creator of 8-bit titles like *Zub* and *Feud*, tends to agree with Cecil. "As a graphic artist, I preferred the Spectrum's crisp, clear, brightly coloured pixels over the Commodore 64's smudged, fat, murky browns and greys, despite the colour limitations of the Spectrum," he says, before drawing upon a fittingly retro analogy. "I always wanted to be a comic artist, and grew up on A4-sized black-and-white British comics. Anything from *Whizzer And Chips* to *2000 AD*, to Marvel UK's black-and-white *Spider-Man* reprints – which I much preferred over imported US comics, which were smaller, with smudged, blurry colours and printed on toilet paper. In my head, the Spectrum was like a brilliant issue of *2000 AD*, whereas the C64 was like a rubbish American comic. My preferred drawing style was black-and-white line drawing, so making



Spectrum graphics, using just one pixel colour at a time, suited me much better than the more painterly style required for C64 graphics."

Allowing nostalgia back into the conversation, we have to admit that one of the best things about both computers' graphical styles is that they were instantly identifiable with their host platform. Look at a screenshot of a game developed specifically for the C64 or Spectrum and you don't need a caption to tell you which system you're looking at. Can you say that about the Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3? We doubt even their creators could.

So which is best? Aside from expert opinion, perhaps the fairest way is to look at the way multiformat games compare to each other. While games made specifically for each system play to their strengths and look fantastic in their own right, they fare differently when ported across to the other system. A lot of Spectrum games remained largely the same when ported to the C64, making for some lazy-looking conversions like *Head Over Heels*, which retained the Speccy's monochrome graphics. Yet when C64 games were translated to the Spectrum, they often had to be redrawn completely and therefore got a chance to take better advantage of their new home. *The Last Ninja*, for example, arguably looks even better when ported to the Spectrum by sacrificing colour in exchange for a greater level of detail.

### WINNER: ZX SPECTRUM

Though technically inferior, the Spectrum's visuals prove more popular with the experts and handle multiformat development with more grace.

## ★ SOUND

There really is no contest here. While the ZX Spectrum certainly emitted sound, hardly any of it constituted music or sound effects in the conventional senses of the words. Rather than outputting sound to the television, the original 48K model of the Speccy used a cheap speaker built into the machine itself. Though capable of producing ten separate octaves, it did so through just one channel and the results were about as musical as a Geiger counter. No matter how much talent a programmer had, you weren't going to get anything to whistle along to from this.

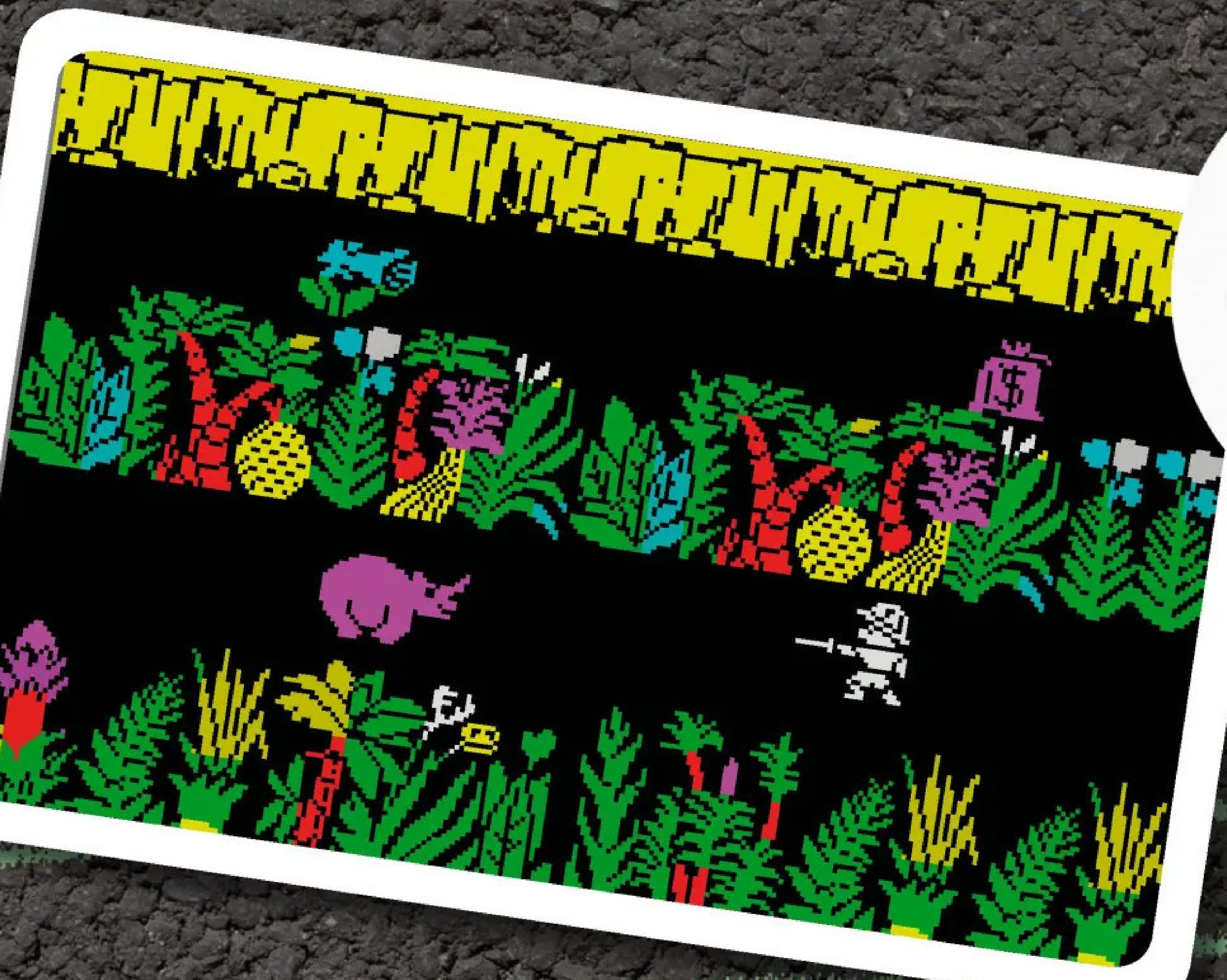
The Commodore 64, by contrast, must have seemed like a full symphony orchestra in your living room. The much-celebrated SID chip sitting inside every Commodore 64 had much more in common with the inner workings of a synthesizer than any comparable home computer of the time, and it basically functioned as such. Capable of creating one of five waveforms across three distinct outputs at once, the SID was a more complex beast than you could ever rightly expect at the time and allowed talented musicians to create some of the true audio masterpieces of the early medium.

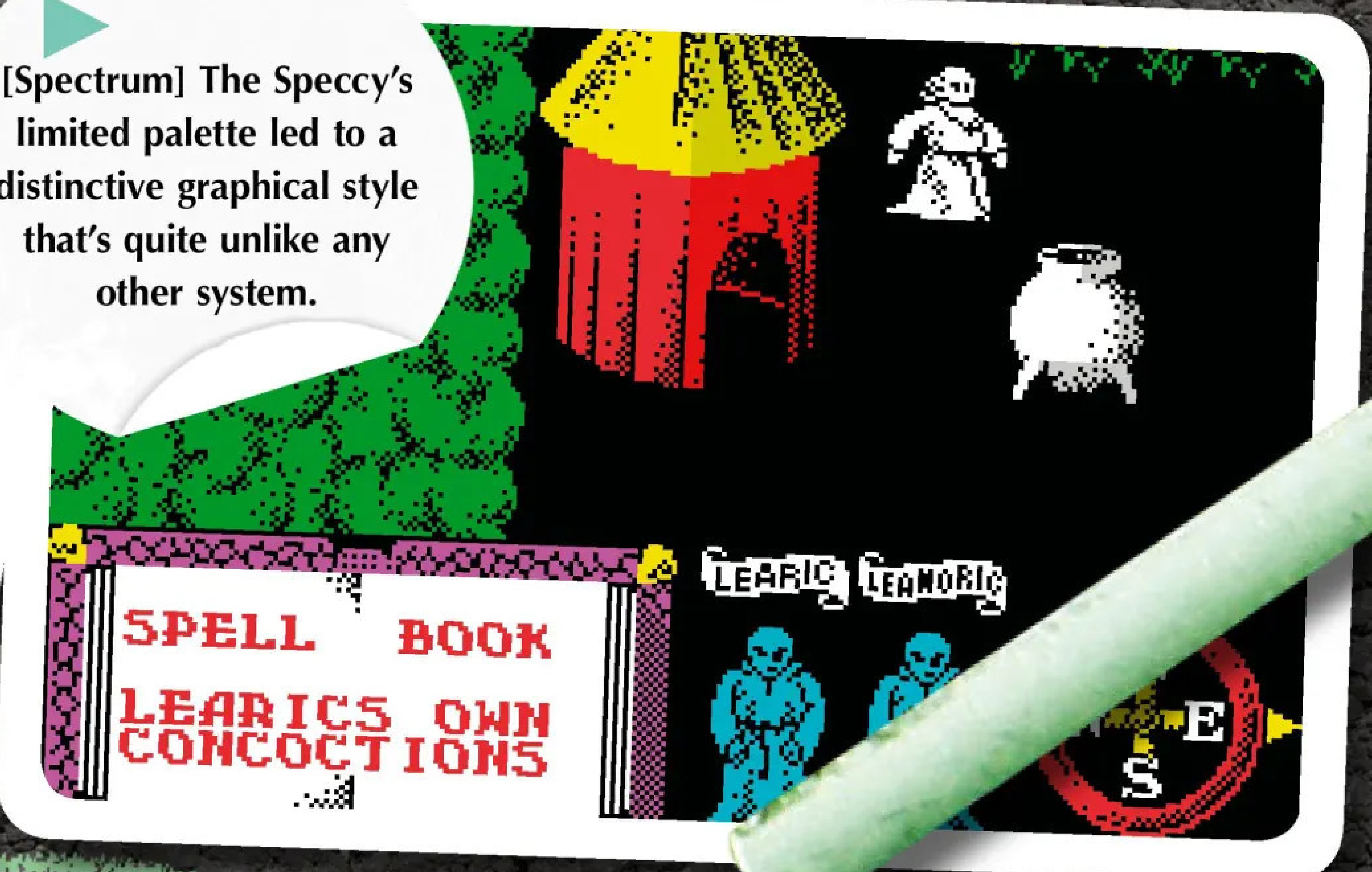
If you care to mention any of the great videogame musicians of the home computer age, almost all of them came from the C64. Names like Rob Hubbard, David Whittaker and Martin Galway are as synonymous with the C64, if not more so, than any programmer or artist of the time. Great games like *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, *Wizball* or *International Karate* were made even greater by their memorable scores. C64 game music was so good, in fact, that it translates brilliantly to real instruments, making for enjoyable live performances, but can also be enjoyed in its original format. Downloads of the original SID files are prolific on the internet, and there's even an iPhone app called SID Player that allows users to download and listen to practically every SID tune ever created.

"My first love was always the SID chip," says Jonathan Dunn, the composer behind such C64 games as *Operation Wolf*, *Rambo III* and *The New Zealand Story*. "The possibilities seemed endless and I was always finding new things you could do with it. The AY chip on the Spectrum was useless. Unless you really loved the sound of square waves." Mike Dailly, creator of the C64's *Ballistix* and *Blood Money*, adds simply: "The sound was in a class of its own."

It wasn't just games that benefited from the SID chip either. The little chip soon took on a life of its own as C64 enthusiasts fell in love with its sounds, which were as unique and identifiable as the Commodore 64's graphics. The Ocean

> **"Look at a game and you can tell which you're looking at. Can you say that about the 360 or PS3?"**





[Spectrum] The Speccy's limited palette led to a distinctive graphical style that's quite unlike any other system.

## COULD HAVE BEEN A CONTENDER

**The 8-bit computers that don't even factor into our argument**

### ATARI 8-BIT

In the wake of the videogames crash of 1983, Atari wisely branched out from console games into the world of computers with its range of 8-bit, programmable systems. Though virtually unknown in the UK, these systems were fairly popular in the US and had their fair share of decent titles. Sadly, they never got near the phenomenal popularity of the C64 as a games machine or Apple's business-oriented computers either.

### AMSTRAD CPC

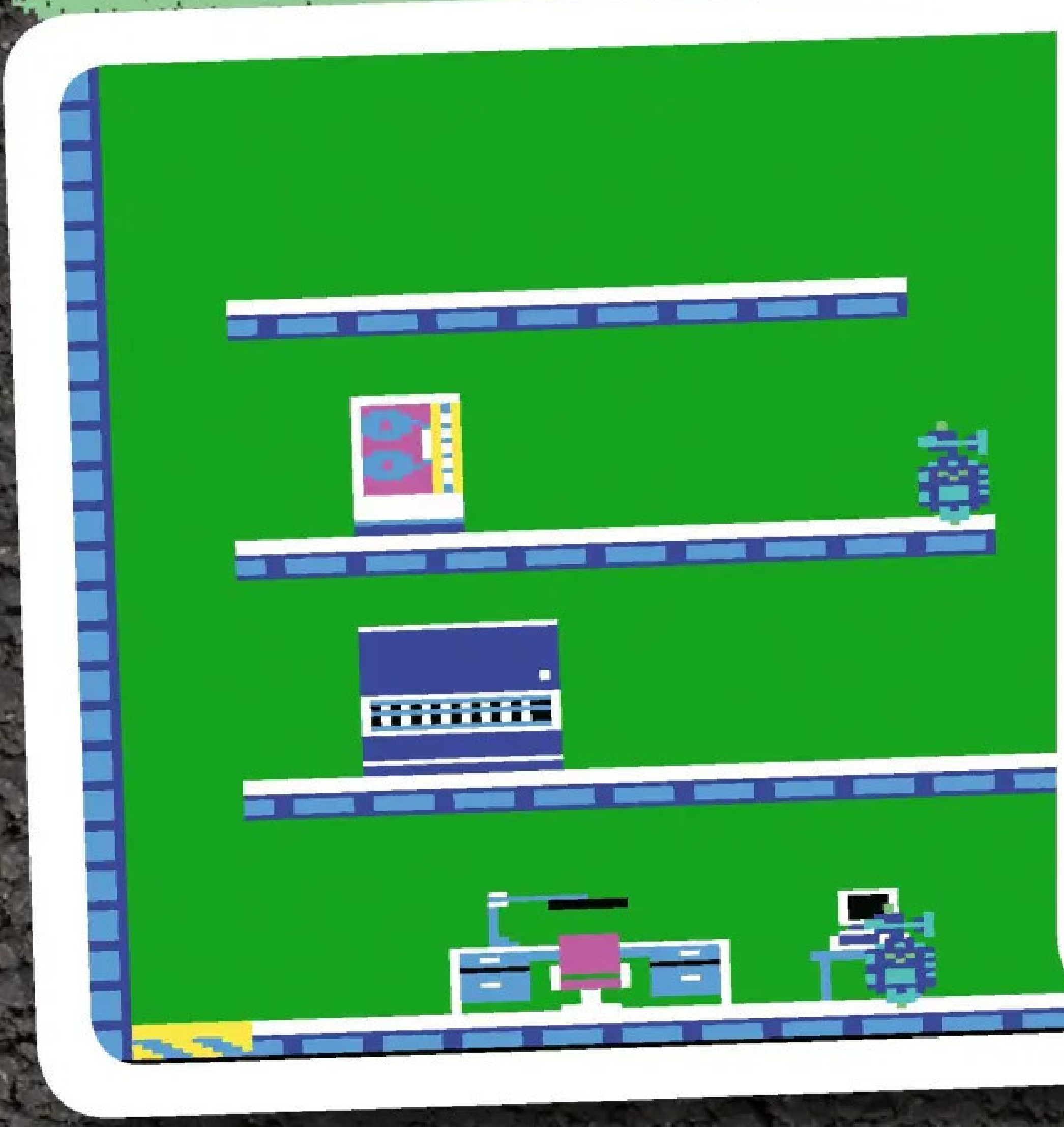
Arguably the closest system to third place in the UK, the CPC sat somewhere between the C64 and Spectrum in terms of capability and appeared to embrace the games industry more than the Sinclair. It garnered strong support in the UK, and some of its conversions are the superior iterations. Ultimately let down by a comparative lack of original titles and international support, the CPC was nevertheless adored by its passionate fan base.

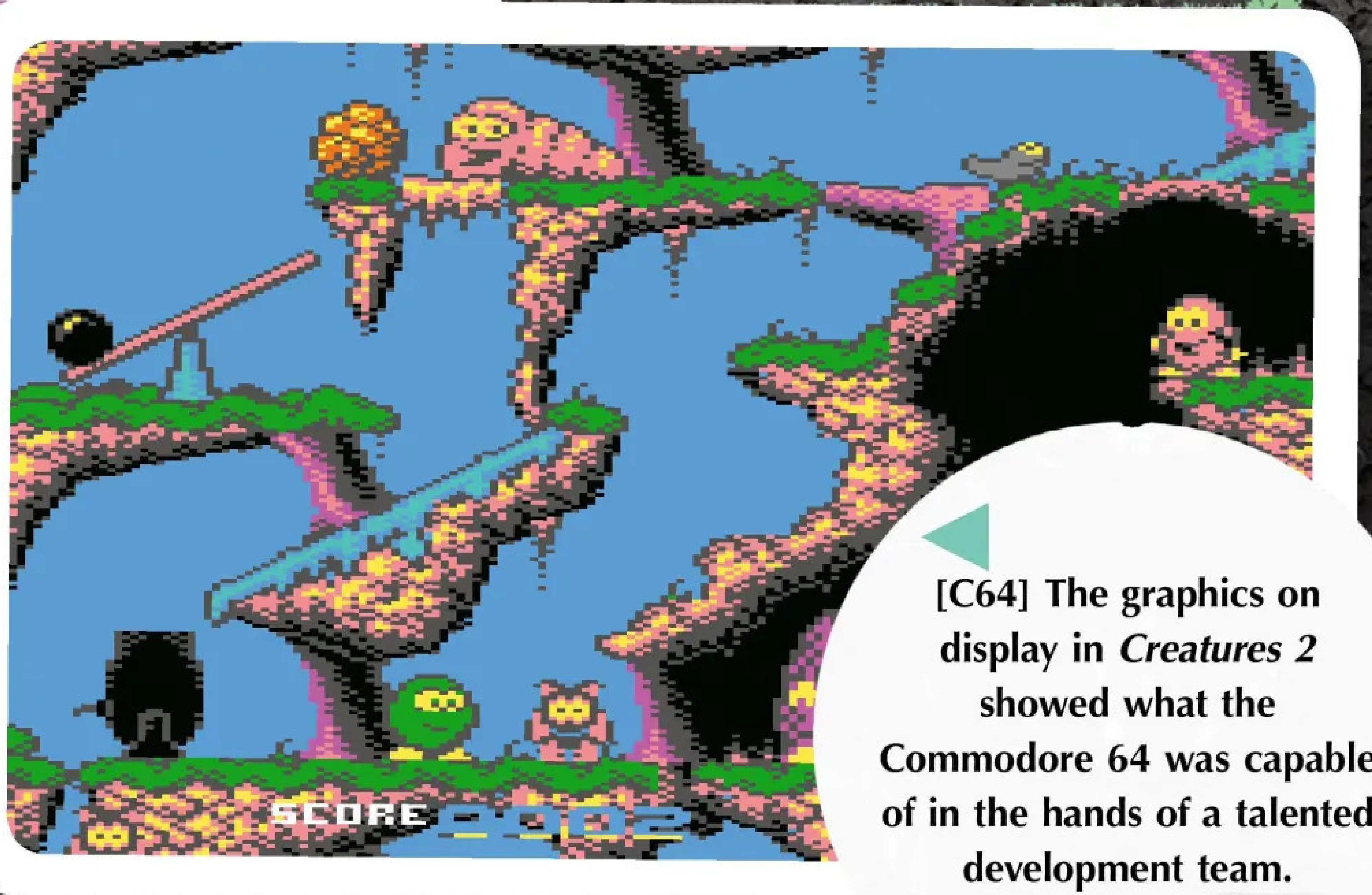
### MSX

This early attempt at a standard format was popular in Japan as well as the Netherlands and parts of South America. It's perhaps best known for great Konami games like *Metal Gear*, *Vampire Killer*, *Penguin Adventure* and *Parodius*, but these cartridge games were expensive. Tape games were also available but were mostly half-hearted Spectrum ports. Despite its brief popularity, the MSX was ultimately undone by a lack of coherent business.

### BBC MICRO

Created by Acorn in conjunction with the BBC, this found its way into nearly every school and became a part of every kid's life as a consequence. Beyond educational software, it had one or two classics to call its own, notably *Elite*. The Micro's downfall is that it didn't manage to get into many homes. Its status as an educational machine just wasn't cool enough, though it can take credit for training a generation of programmers.





[C64] The graphics on display in *Creatures 2* showed what the Commodore 64 was capable of in the hands of a talented development team.

loading theme, for example, which played as an Ocean game streamed in from the tape drive, is one of the best compositions of the 8-bit age, completely divorced of association from any specific game. And it didn't stop there. A demo scene quickly sprang up around the SID within the lifetime of the C64, encouraging budding electronic musicians to create their own tracks and enter them into competitions in computing magazines of the time. Into the '90s, the strength and personality of the SID sound led the C64 to become one of the most prominent features of the burgeoning chiptune movement. And the humble Commodore chip even found its way into popular culture as chart musicians sampled old game tunes or even created their own new tracks on custom-built SID synthesizers.

So there you have it. The Commodore 64's incredible SID chip was responsible for some of the best-sounding games of the 8-bit age and was so good that it has outlived its host machine and even an association with gaming altogether. 36 years after its creation, people are walking around listening to C64 music on their fancy Apple phones or even creating new Commodore music of their own. The Spectrum's tinny little speaker, meanwhile, is left completely forgotten.

### WINNER: Commodore 64

A brilliant piece of hardware design led to some of the most memorable videogame tunes of the '80s and was arguably responsible for a whole new genre of music. There's just no beating the sound of a C64.

## ✱ DEVELOPMENT

You don't need to pry open the casings of either computer to see that the Commodore 64 was the technically superior piece of hardware. But does that mean that it was the best of the two to develop for? Not necessarily. Ste Pickford explains his reasons why not…

"Once I started working at a large development studio, making Spectrum and C64 games together in the same open-plan office, the playground argument carried on but with an added technical dimension. The hardware sprites and scrolling of the C64 meant that it was possible, without that much skill or talent, to get a sprite moving on a scrolling background, and as a consequence there were a lot of rubbish C64 programmers about back then. There were plenty of amazing C64 programming geniuses as well, but it was a mixed bag. The Spectrum's less-helpful hardware – more or less just a processor and some oddly laid-out VRAM – meant that to even get a sprite moving around on the screen you had to be a pretty decent programmer, so as a consequence all the Spectrum guys were sharp and clever, or they wouldn't have got the job. This turned the platform argument into one about good programmers versus bad programmers, with jokes about C64 games with panels on the right-hand side of the screen because the programmers couldn't handle the MSB."

Have a look at a few screenshots and it's easy to see what Pickford is getting at. In the wrong hands, the C64 produced some truly horrifying results. Take US Gold's conversion of *Street Fighter II*, for example. The mess of coloured blobs seemingly thrown on top of each other made it look as though the C64 had thrown up all of the contents of its metaphorical stomach at once, while the buggy, haphazard gameplay certainly lends credence to the idea that the low barrier to entry for C64 development attracted technically unskilled talent.

Yet the opposite is also true. Match up talented coders and artists with the power of the C64 and the results were spectacular. Masterpieces – and we mean *masterpieces* – like *International Karate* or *Maniac Mansion* ran brilliantly and looked more attractive than just about anything else out there. Including, it could be argued, anything on consoles like the NES or Master System. And towards the end of the C64's life, a new wave of games, like the unbelievably pretty *Creatures 2*, demonstrated just how far the system could be pushed in the right hands.

"I prefer the C64 for coding because it had lots of hardware to play with and produced silky smooth gaming," says Mike Dailly. "The Speccy was a great but simple machine to start learning with, but the C64 was the one you really wanted; lots of RAM, lots of toys, and great games, which sounded amazing."

That's not to say that the Spectrum couldn't be made to do unexpected things, though. Far from it. As Ste Pickford suggests, the restrictions of the Spectrum hardware – which was arguably designed more as a hobbyist's computer than one intended for mass-produced, commercial software – forced developers to be more creative and led them to explore technical avenues unnecessary on other platforms. Another Pickford, Ste's brother John, clarifies: "The C64 was clearly more capable graphically and better designed as a videogames machine. From a coding point of view, the Spectrum was simpler and the lack of any hardware-assisted sprites or scrolling meant you had to get creative and work out how to do those things in software with very limited CPU power. By the time you've worked out how to drag a sprite across the screen you've learned a hell of a lot compared to doing the same on the 64. So yeah, I guess the 64 was the better machine, but I'm glad I learned my trade on the Spectrum."

Both Pickfords touch on an extremely important point. Since the Spectrum's limited hardware forced coders to get creative, the system was the best teacher you could hope for and made geniuses out of an entire nation of bedroom programmers. The Spectrum, more so than any other system, is the crucible of the British games industry, and without it such great UK studios as Rare, Blitz or Codemasters may never have existed.

### Winner: ZX Spectrum

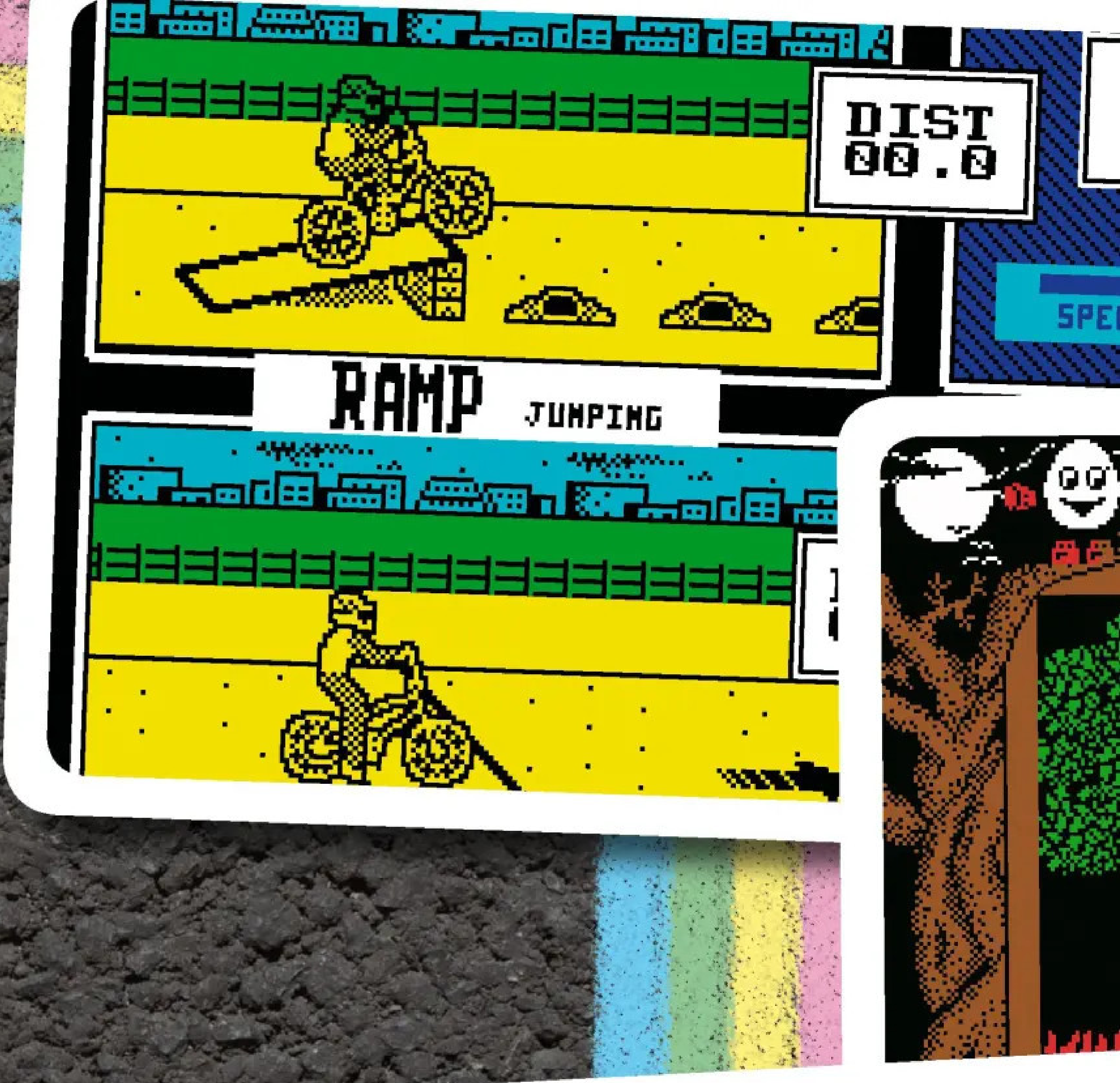
Ease of development may be considered a must in the modern age, but in the formative years of the games industry it was the foibles of the primitive Spectrum that sorted the wheat from the chaff and allowed great programmers to rise to the top. Its legacy – the UK games industry of 2012 – cannot be overlooked.

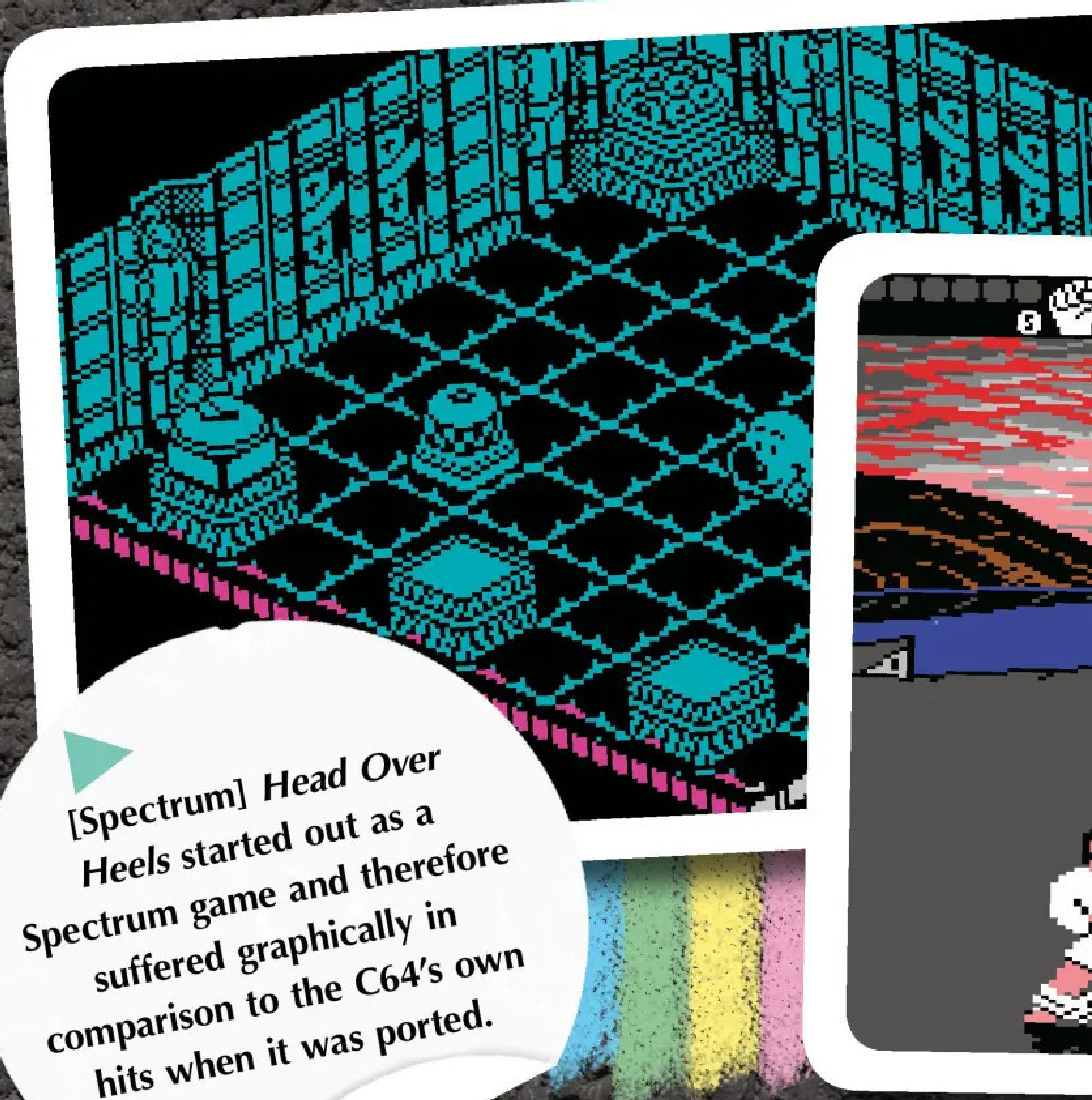
## * SUPPORT

How important is support to the success of a games system? It's easy to overlook this factor, but without the support of games developers, a console or computer is just an expensive slab of plastic that competes with your TV for all the dust in the room.

Both the Commodore 64 and the Spectrum enjoyed incredible support from game developers, but in vastly different ways. And the key differentiator between the two should be obvious to anyone who was paying attention: the Spectrum had incredible British support, whereas the Commodore 64 was a truly international computer.

Perhaps this was inevitable. Sinclair was a relatively tiny UK-based company that started off selling kit-built computers by mail order and never really progressed too far beyond those humble origins. Commodore, or Commodore Business Machines, to give it its full title, was



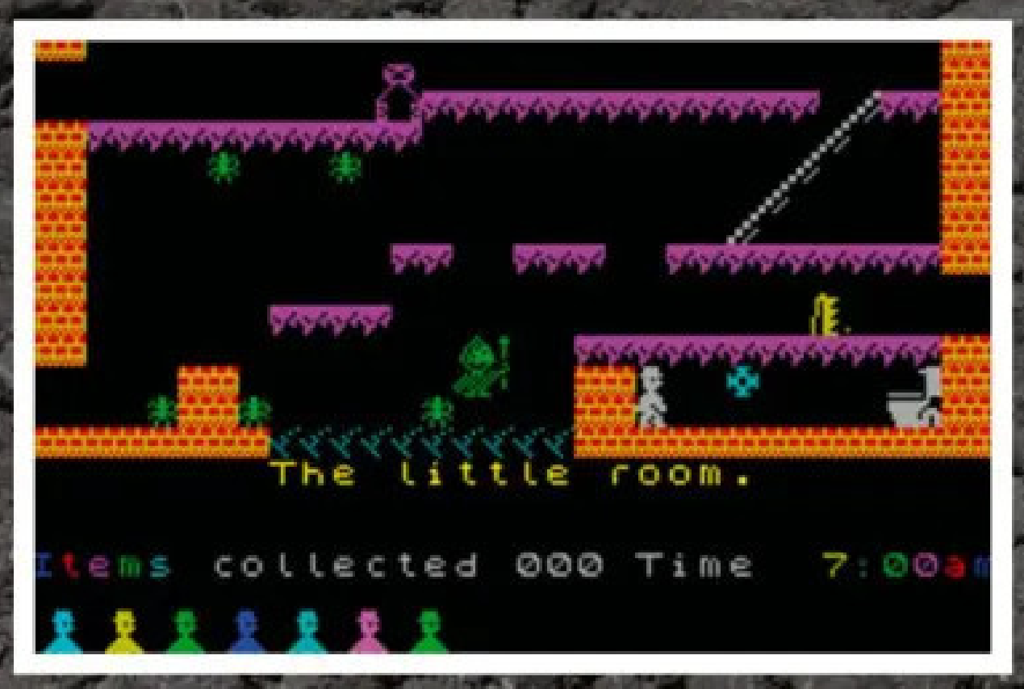


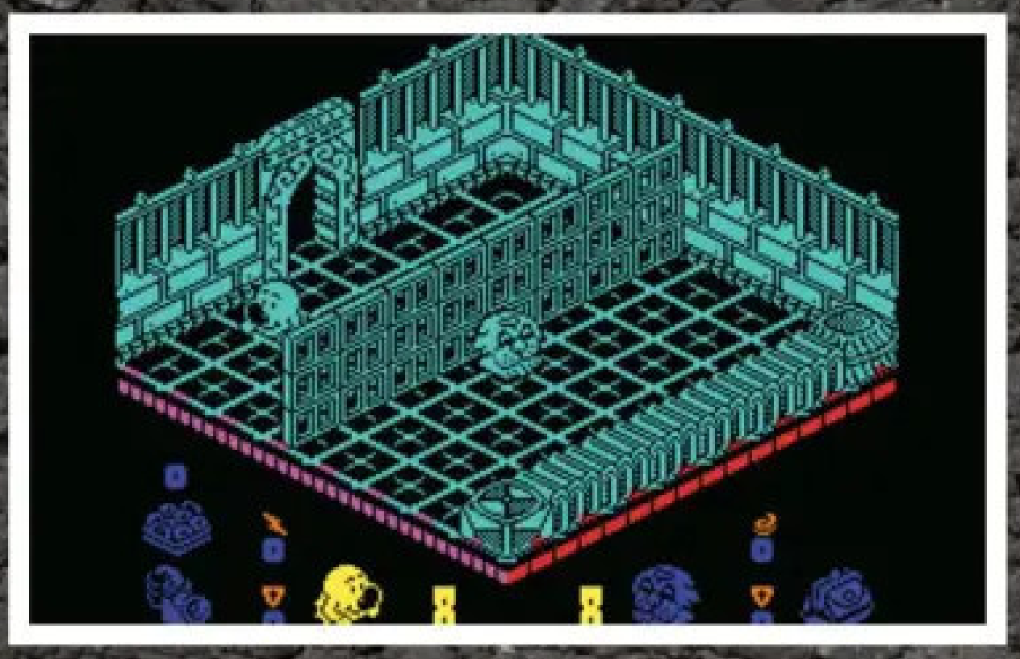
▶ [Spectrum] *Head Over Heels* started out as a Spectrum game and therefore suffered graphically in comparison to the C64's own hits when it was ported.

## The 5 most important Spectrum games

### Jet Set Willy

Made by a 17-year-old rockstar programmer, about a millionaire miner with a hangover, and so broken it couldn't be completed without cheat codes, *Jet Set Willy* is the prototypical Spectrum game. An experience like this could only have been made in the '80s and on the Speccy.



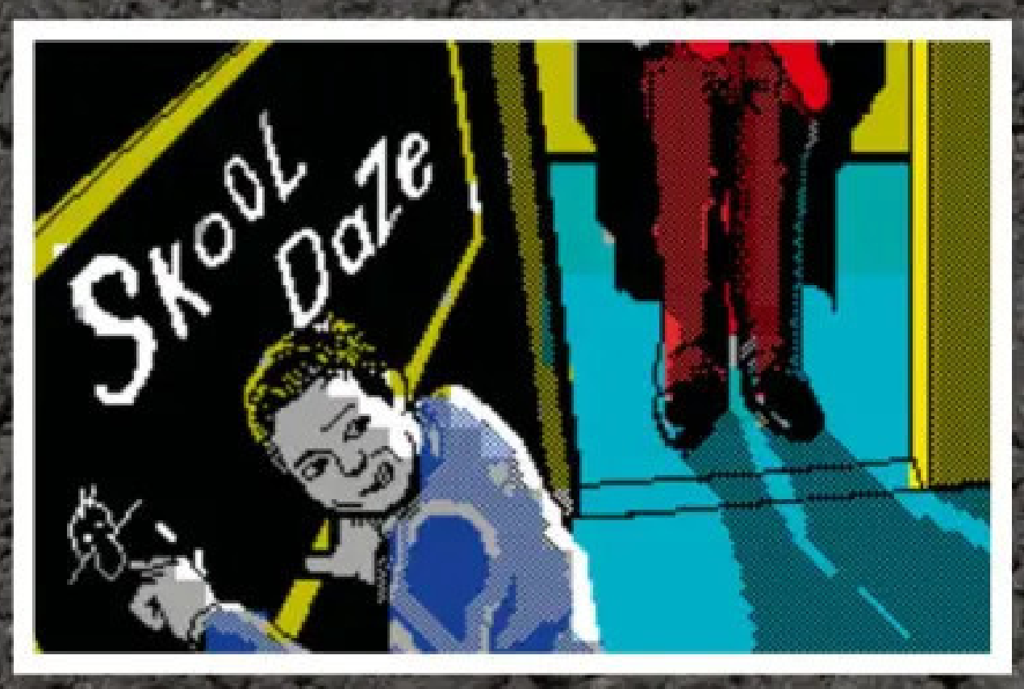


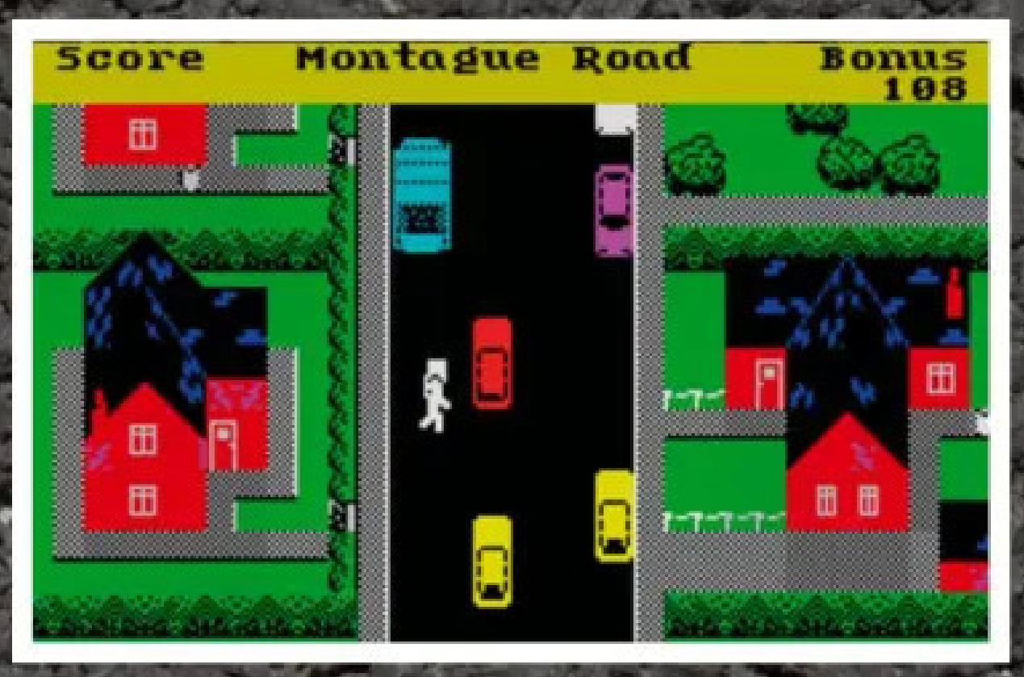
### Head Over Heels

This ingenious adventure game combined more wacky British humour with a unique gameplay concept that has yet to be bettered. *Head Over Heels* proves that imagination and talent count so much more than beefy system specs.

### Skool Daze

A game without a genre, *Skool Daze* took a setting that almost every Spectrum owner must have loathed and gave them the power to make school fun. This was a game all about play for the sake of play and another example of the free imagination made possible by bedroom programming.



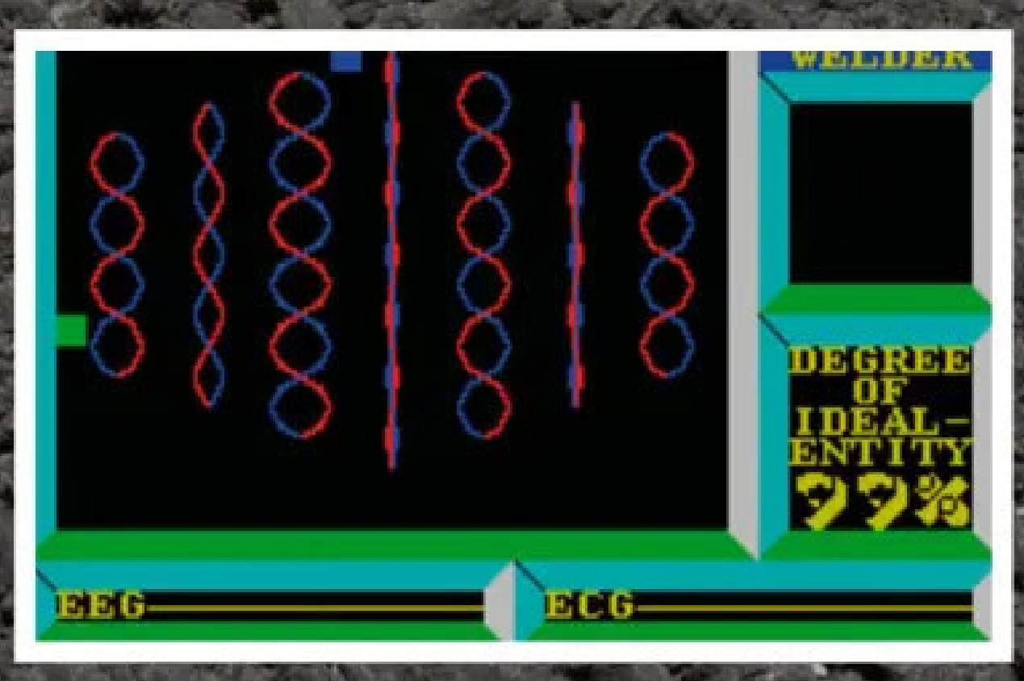


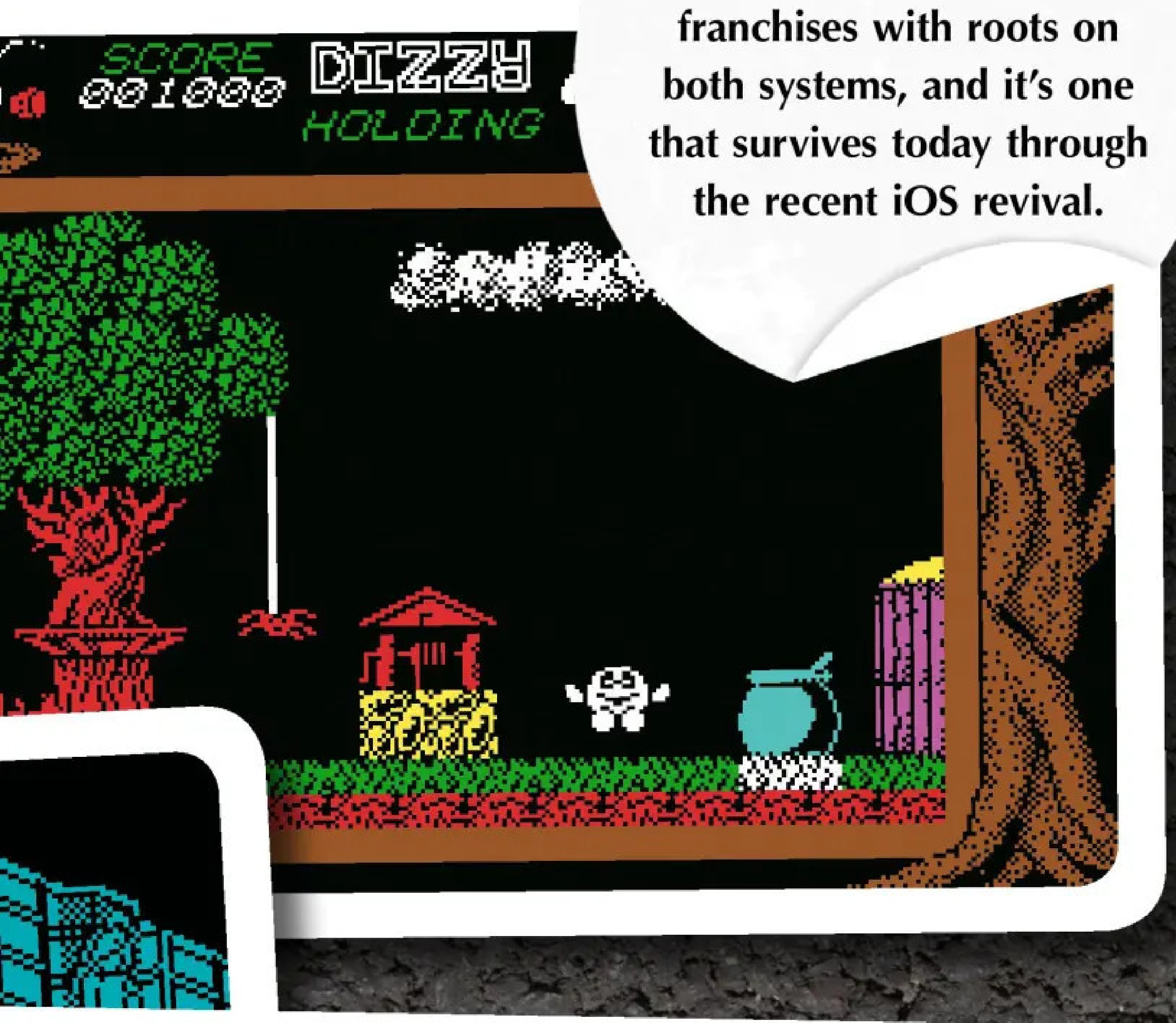
### Trashman

Many games put the player in control of an aspirational hero – soldier, cop, ninja or sportsman – but on the Spectrum it seemed like anyone could be a hero – even a binman. *Trashman* did little to sex up the profession, though you could find an old Speccy in the bin if you were lucky.

### Deus Ex Machina

This adventure got around the limitations of the hardware by including a separate soundtrack tape, featuring voiceover from Jon Pertwee, Frankie Howard and Ian Dury. A sequel is in the works, featuring the vocal talents of Sir Christopher Lee.





[C64] The Dizzy series is one of many 8-bit franchises with roots on both systems, and it's one that survives today through the recent iOS revival.

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01
TIME
WHITE

a titan by comparison. The American company easily rivalled its contemporaries like Apple or Atari for its deep pockets, marketing clout and vision. Its combined resources and ambition made it virtually unstoppable, at least for a few years anyway.

Commodore really had its act together when it came to support of the C64, particularly for games. The Commodore-branded 'Datasette' recorder allowed software to load much more reliably than the pernickety Spectrum, meaning there was no fiddling around with volume controls or sacrificing a pet to Satan in the vain hope of getting a game to load here. Likewise, the 1541 disk drive, for those who could afford one, brought even greater usability and was particularly instrumental in the American home computer boom, leading to major players like Electronic Arts and LucasFilm Games lending their considerable weight to the C64 library.

It's possible that the Spectrum could have enjoyed such support too, but Sinclair's head, Sir Clive Sinclair, appeared to have little interest in supporting videogames, despite the boost they obviously gave the computing business, and the company showed little sign of attempting to get games developers on board. Only the huge UK installed base, created by the Spectrum's brilliantly affordable price point, encouraged independent UK games publishers to get involved with the system. But the support of the burgeoning American games industry was severely lacking.

To get some idea of the non-impact the Spectrum had in the US, we spoke to Shane R Monroe, host of Retro Gaming Radio, who was a young man during the C64's heyday. "Commodore had a huge presence everywhere – you couldn't turn around without running into a Commodore display," Monroe says of the '80s American retail landscape. "Unlike the Amiga, which got zero advertising, the C64 was in every department store – including then-popular shopping destinations like JCPenney and Sears. I believe, for a period of time, even Toys R Us carried Commodore product. During the holidays, you couldn't turn the channel without landing on a C64 ad, complete with the Bach theme that became a household tune. The USA is all about what's on TV, even more then than now. Without the internet to guide people, TV is what you had.

"The Spectrum simply wasn't to be found. No demo machines. No TV commercials. No word of mouth. The elitist fights then were 'C64 vs Atari' or 'C64 vs Apple'. Spectrum wasn't even part of the equation. Between Commodore's rampant advertising, Atari's hardcore name recognition and gaming background, and Apple's incessant product dumping into the school system, there just wasn't room for the Speccy."

> **"The Spectrum had incredible British support, whereas the C64 was an international computer"**

## THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT COMMODORE 64 GAMES

### INTERNATIONAL KARATE

IK features everything that's great about C64 gaming. Stunning visuals, a brilliant soundtrack and gameplay so fun you could play it over and over again. That Archer Maclean made a fighting game work with a stick and one button is *IK*'s greatest achievement.

### MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND

Made near the end of the C64's life, *Mayhem In Monsterland* exploded with colour, looking as good as a Japanese platform game and playing equally well. If anyone accuses the C64 of featuring Lego-style visuals, just show them this.

### MANIAC MANSION

Bedroom programming is all well and good, but look what happened when huge companies got their hands on the C64! *Maniac Mansion* was filled with ambitious design that even its creators failed to match. It's also the debut of SCUMM, the engine that redefined adventures.

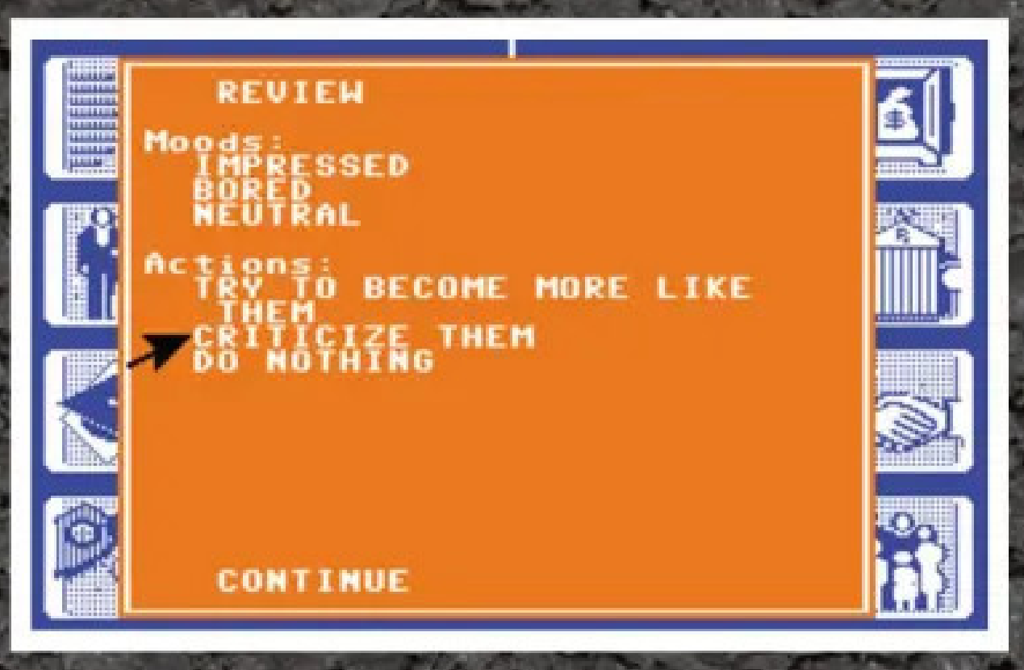
Open
Close
Read
Walk to
Pick up
What is
New Kid
Unlock
Use
Turn on
Turn off
Fix

### LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE

One of the most ingenious uses of the floppy disk, this David Crane production gave you a house on a disk, and a little man who seemed to live inside your TV. The level of illusion on display is nothing short of remarkable for the time and paved the way for later works like *The Sims*.

### ALTER EGO

Made by a psychologist rather than a game designer, *Alter Ego* saw you play out an entire life from conception to death – whether by natural causes or otherwise. Its series of moral dilemmas and philosophical questions treated the player like a mature adult.

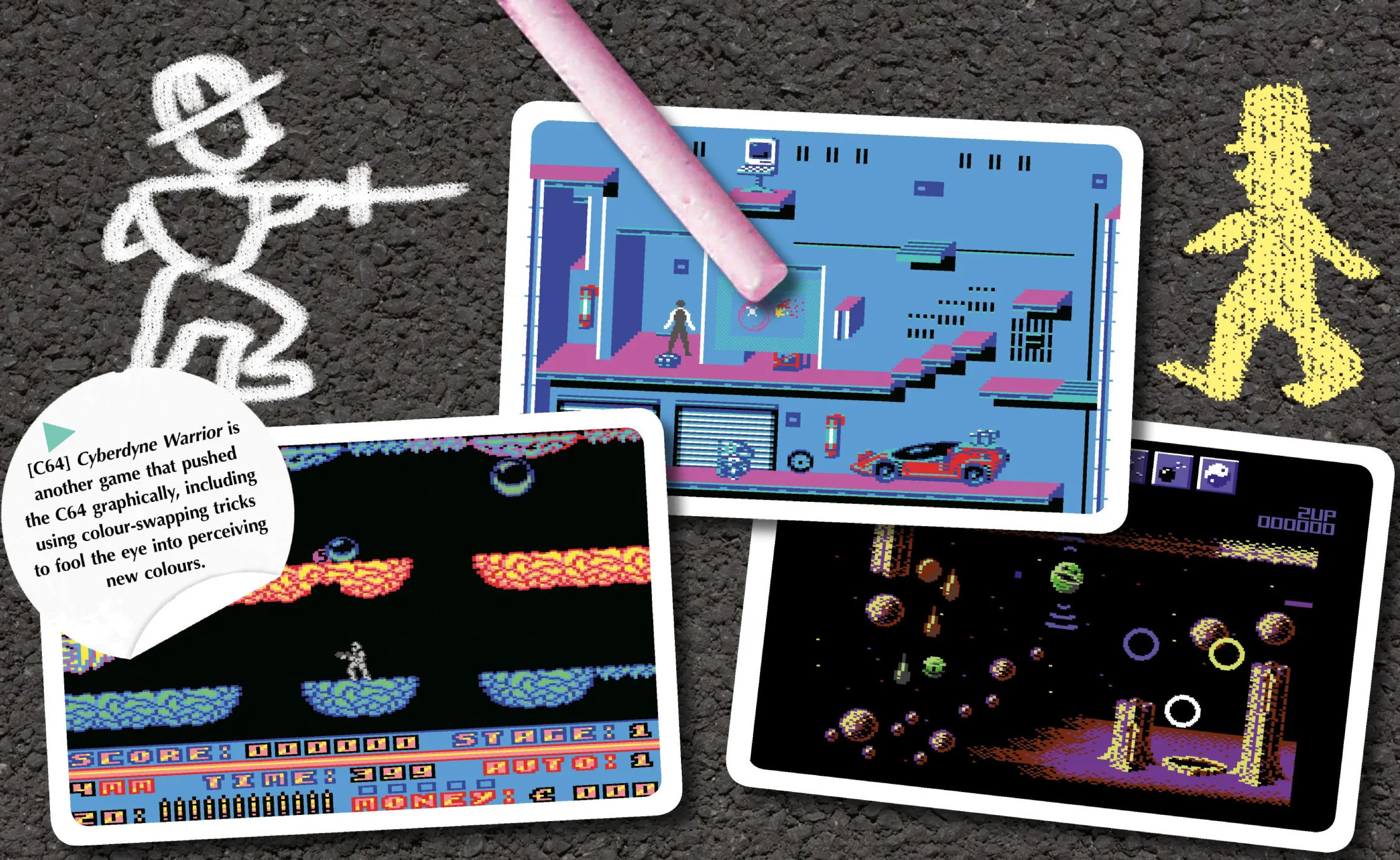


REVIEW

Moods:
IMPRESSED
BORED
NEUTRAL

Actions:
TRY TO BECOME MORE LIKE THEM
CRITICIZE THEM
DO NOTHING

CONTINUE



[C64] *Cyberdyne Warrior* is another game that pushed the C64 graphically, including using colour-swapping tricks to fool the eye into perceiving new colours.

UK-based readers might think that the US fate of the Spectrum was irrelevant to them, but it couldn't have been more important. While the Commodore 64 received excellent UK support and conversions of most of the significant Spectrum, Amstrad or BBC games, its US origins meant that it got a whole wealth of other classics that its rival systems missed out on. The Spectrum's catalogue of software, by comparison, seemed half-empty.

### WINNER: Commodore 64

Officially supported two years longer than the Spectrum, showered with superior hardware, and attracting the cream of the US games industry, the Commodore 64 had the best support you could ever realistically hope for.

## GAMES

We interviewed a fair few game developers in the hope of settling this age-old argument, but some simply refused to pick sides. Much to our surprise, one of the most vehement fence-sitters was none other than Gary Penn, ex-editor of Commodore 64 magazine Zzap!64. "There were some groundbreaking, seminal works on both Spectrum and C64," says the level-headed Penn. "It'd be ignorant to ignore that fact. Real gamers just want decent games to play, regardless of what they play them on."

Well, if it's great games you're after then anyone reading this magazine knows that the C64 and Spectrum could match each other blow-for-blow. For every *Wizball* there's a *Sabre Wulf*, for every *Skool Daze* a *Paradroid*. Each system has its fair share of titles that defined the 8-bit era and made the '80s a fantastic time to get into videogames.

We could go on and on about the best games on each computer, and have done elsewhere in this feature, but for now let's allow the experts to have their say.

"For me, this is an easy question with an easy answer," says Sensible Software's Jon Hare. "Not only was the Commodore 64 a better machine in nearly all respects, it was also much better for our games. *Parallax*, *Wizball*, *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit*, *MicroProse Soccer* and *International 3D Tennis*… So C64 all the way for me." Hare may be a little biased, sure, but there's no denying that is one great list of games.

Charles Cecil, meanwhile, credits a single game for swinging his vote: "With the release of *Impossible Mission* in 1984, a magnificently impressive game, the Commodore 64 finally surged ahead, remaining forever out of reach of the Spectrum."

Vocal support for the Speccy's catalogue of games is harder to come by, but Ste Pickford chimes in to remind us of some greats. "In the end, I think the Spectrum wins because ultimately the difficult hardware – the lack of a 'path of least resistance' to scrolling-background sprite games – meant that there was more creativity and originality in the Spectrum software catalogue," he says. "We got more odd and unusual games

> *"Real gamers just want decent games to play, regardless of what they play them on"*

like *Knight Lore*, *Tau Ceti*, *Ant Attack*, *Avalon*, *TLL* and *Deus Ex Machina*, even if we did miss out on smooth, 60fps scrolling shoot-'em-ups."

Pickford is certainly right about the Spectrum's quirkiness. No other games machine outside Japan can list such a bonkers line-up of software. Millionaire miners, handbag-carrying dogs, scrounging binmen and criminal babies were perfectly commonplace on the Spectrum, and gave the system a weird British feeling that was part surrealist comedy, part acid trip. You can't not love a system for that. But, well…

A lot of those quirky games were eventually ported to the Commodore 64, which also happened to have its fair share of unique classics on top. While the Spectrum was defined by its quirky British games, some fine arcade conversions and the tremendous support of Ultimate Play The Game, the C64 had a catalogue that grew up and evolved alongside the machine. With each passing year, its greatest developers outdid themselves to produce ever more brilliant experiences – particularly in the crucial US market. Back when Electronic Arts was best known for its designer-driven creations, it churned out classic after classic – *Racing Destruction Set*, *M.U.L.E.* *The Bard's Tale* and *Legacy Of The Ancients*, to name just a few. Then there's LucasFilm Games and, particularly, *Maniac Mansion*, a game so good it practically spawned a genre and paved the way for incredible works like *The Secret Of Monkey Island*. Over in the UK, the likes of System 3 and Sensible Software made the C64 sing with *International Karate*, *Impossible Mission* and *Wizball*, among others. Even in the computer's twilight years, new developers pushed the system further. Could you have imagined games like *Creatures* or *Mayhem In Monsterland* running on the C64 back in 1982? You couldn't, but the hardware was the same. The only thing that changed was the industry's understanding of it.

The Commodore 64 remained in production for a staggering 12 years and was constantly supported by an ever-evolving catalogue of games. Only the demise of Commodore in 1994 brought the system to a halt. Who knows where it would have gone if the company had survived. The Spectrum, meanwhile, was discontinued by 1992, though its shelf life, and the breadth of its software, arguably dried up long before that.

### WINNER: COMMODORE 64

While both systems matched each other for some time, the C64 just about wins out due to sheer lastability. It kept going and going for years, outlasting its rival and improving on itself with every release. The C64's vast catalogue of classics narrowly gives it the edge.

## * CONCLUSION

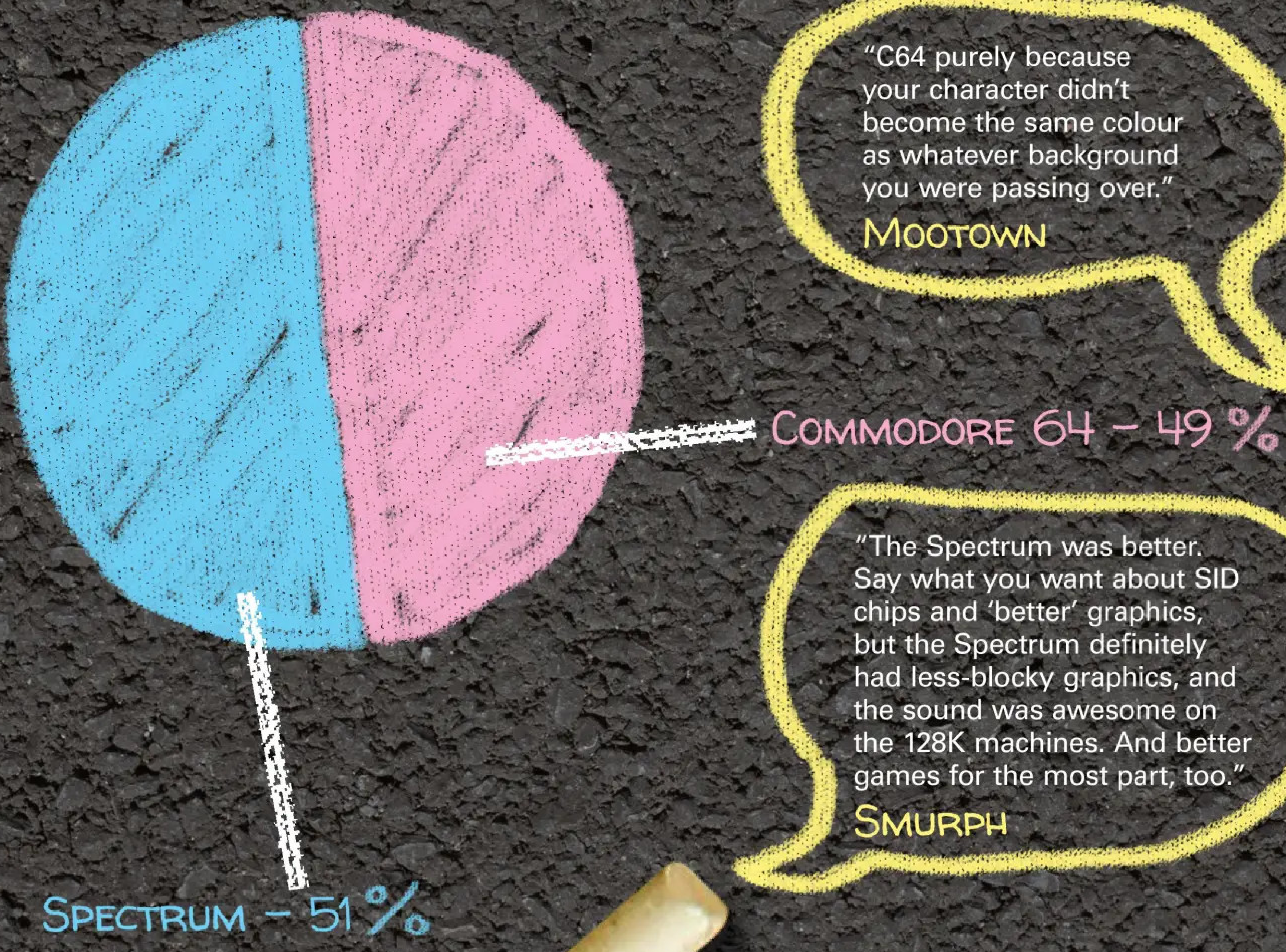
Obviously the most advanced and powerful piece of hardware, you'd think that the Commodore 64 would stamp all over the Spectrum, but, certainly in the UK, the competition was no walk in the park. The Speccy's affordability, utterly crazy and ultimately endearing catalogue of games, and its importance to the UK games industry make it a supremely special system. But the Commodore 64 is just that little bit superior.

With the power of Commodore behind it, and the backing of the international games industry, the C64 enjoyed a long life with well over a decade's worth of incredible games produced. The technical prowess of the machine, as well as the added flexibility of the disk drive, led to the creation of some amazing games for their time, and while the Pickford brothers may be right that the C64 encouraged lazy developers, it also attracted many of the best. Not to mention the best musicians, who tripped over themselves to play with the SID chip and create musical masterpieces that have taken on a life of their own outside the games.

Speccy fans – don't get your knickers in a twist. We love the rubber-keyed wunderkind as much as you. But the simple fact is that the Commodore 64 is a greater machine, with bigger, arguably more important games. Especially since they're so much easier to load and don't get confused by more than one colour! The Commodore 64 is the best 8-bit computer. Argument over.

## READERS' VIEW

WE ASKED RETRO GAMER'S FORUM TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE C64 AND SPECCY. TURNS OUT THEY DISAGREE WITH US. BUT ONLY JUST...



"C64 purely because your character didn't become the same colour as whatever background you were passing over."

**MOOTOWN**

"With the C64, once you get past the better-quality shooters there's not a lot there to match the Spectrum's impressive array of arcade adventures and platformers. The Spectrum also canes the C64 for text adventures, which is important for me. The fact that Ultimate's output on the Speccy utterly trounces what they put out on the C64 is probably enough reason on its own to relegate the C64 to second place."

**CRUNCHY**

"The Spectrum was better. Say what you want about SID chips and 'better' graphics, but the Spectrum definitely had less-blocky graphics, and the sound was awesome on the 128K machines. And better games for the most part, too."

**SMURPH**

"I voted Speccy. In all honesty, it's because I owned one, but I will say, when it came to going to friends' houses, it was the Speccy that seemed to have the 'jaw drop' moments that made others jealous. Best I remember was when I helped a friend fire up his first computer, which was a second-hand Spectrum +2. I loaded up *Starstrike II*, and even the C64 boys were drooling!"

**THULSADOOM**

# CABBAGE PATCH KIDS

They were cute, they were adorable, they had fat squidgy faces, and everyone loved to hug them close. We're not talking about toddlers but the Cabbage Patch Kids they used to play with, the big-faced fabric creations charming their way into the hearts of kids and adults alike.

They were created by Xavier Roberts, a 21-year-old art student in Cleveland. He used quilting skills learned from his mother to stitch together fabric dolls, which he called The Little People. Although Roberts didn't sell his dolls, he took them to various art fairs where they eventually drew the attention of toy-maker Coleco. Coleco acquired the licence for the dolls and renamed them Cabbage Patch Kids, beginning mass production in 1982.

Cabbage Patch Kids were somewhere between dolls and teddy bears, having the human features of the former but the soft squishiness of the latter.

Although they didn't have any of the 'features' of advanced dolls, such as the ability to talk, Cabbage Patch Kids didn't need them. They radiated personality, warmth and charm, their unique look and soft feel making them a must-have toy as soon as they went on sale.

One unique quirk of production also enhanced their appeal. The original dolls had nine head variations to try to keep each doll unique, in a nod to the hand-stitched nature of the The Little People. That made Cabbage Patch Kids even more collectible, as fans didn't just stop at one…

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Coleco
**First released:** 1982
**Expect to pay:** £15

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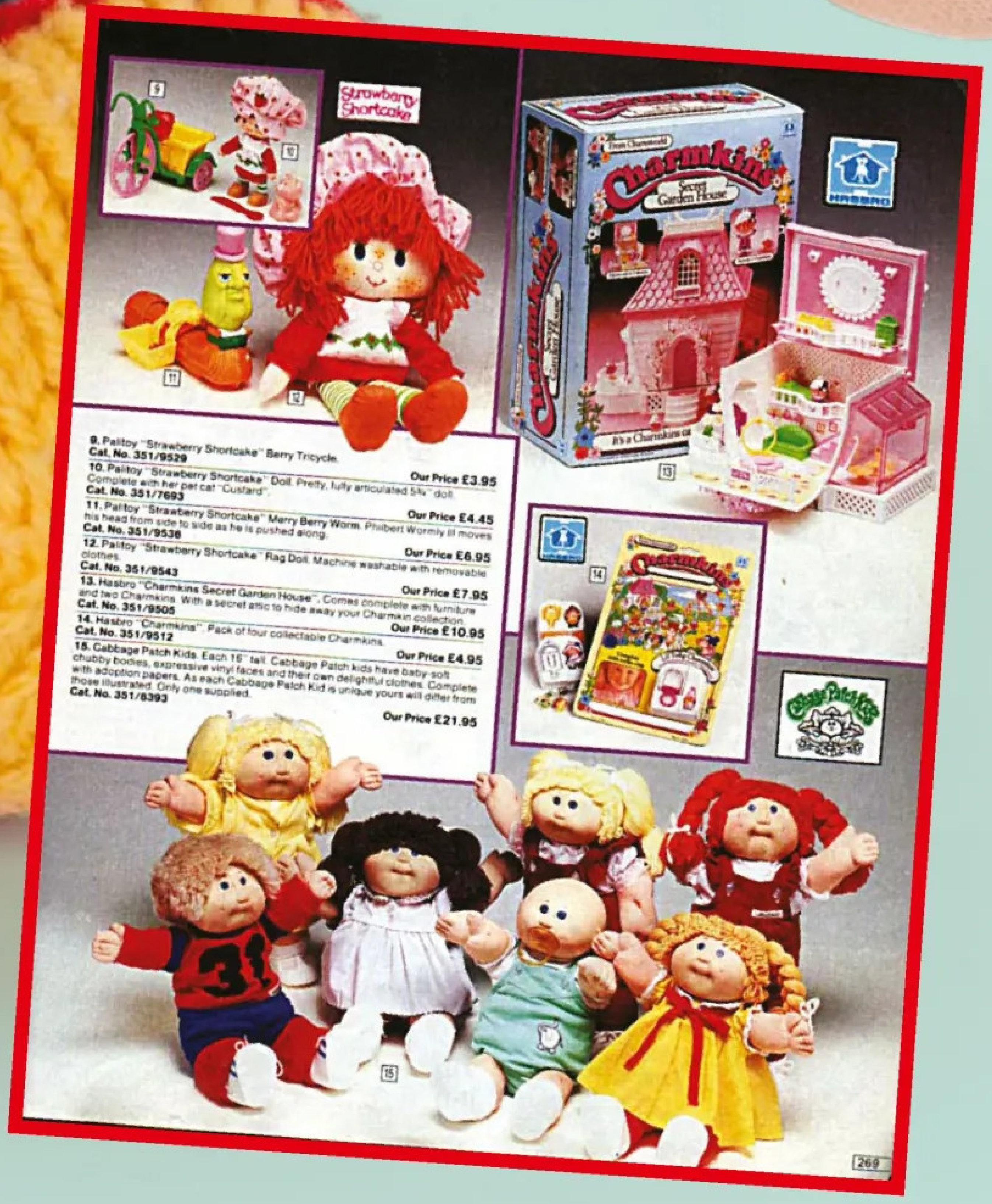
## THE LEGACY

Coleco went out of business, but the Cabbage Patch Kids story didn't end there. The licence to manufacture them has been passed from one toy company to another, and Wicked Cool Toys is the current manufacturer of the famous dolls. Along the way, the Cabbage Patch Kids were taken to space in 1985, and were used as the official mascot of the 1992 United States Olympic Team.

▲ Each Cabbage Patch Kid was sold with a birth certificate showing the date and time of their birth, giving the dolls an extra degree of authenticity. To date, more than 130 million of the dolls have been 'born' around the world.

▶ The Cabbage Patch Doll line has come a long way from its humble origins. With the range still going strong, more and more designs continue to be introduced, with adoptable pets being among the new additions to the family.


Strawberry Shortcake
9
10
11
12
Charmkins
Secret Garden House
HASBRO
13
14
15
Cabbage Patch Kids
269

9. Palitoy "Strawberry Shortcake" Berry Tricycle.
Cat. No. 351/9529 Our Price £3.95

10. Palitoy "Strawberry Shortcake" Doll. Pretty, fully articulated 5½" doll. Complete with her pet cat "Custard".
Cat. No. 351/7693 Our Price £4.45

11. Palitoy "Strawberry Shortcake" Merry Berry Worm. Philbert Wormly III moves his head from side to side as he is pushed along.
Cat. No. 351/9536 Our Price £6.95

12. Palitoy "Strawberry Shortcake" Rag Doll. Machine washable with removable clothes.
Cat. No. 351/9543 Our Price £7.95

13. Hasbro "Charmkins Secret Garden House". Comes complete with furniture and two Charmkins. With a secret attic to hide away your Charmkin collection.
Cat. No. 351/9505 Our Price £10.95

14. Hasbro "Charmkins". Pack of four collectable Charmkins.
Cat. No. 351/9512 Our Price £4.95

15. Cabbage Patch Kids. Each 16" tall. Cabbage Patch kids have baby-soft chubby bodies, expressive vinyl faces and their own delightful clothes. Complete with adoption papers. As each Cabbage Patch Kid is unique yours will differ from those illustrated. Only one supplied.
Cat. No. 351/8393 Our Price £21.95

# THUNDERCATS

## Thunder… Thunder… Thunder… ThunderCats!

Akira. *Pokémon*. *Ghost in the Shell*. Studio Ghibli. We're used to Japanese animation being a major part of our entertainment scene nowadays, but that wasn't always the case. It wasn't until the late '70s that the Western world started getting its first taste of Japanese animation on Saturday morning TV, thanks to the first wave of Far East imports such as *Battle of the Planets* and *Star Blazers*.

Those Japanese cartoons immediately stood out straight from everything else shown on Saturday mornings, as Japanese animation dazzled young eyes. The flowing lines, the fine detail, the shadows and shading, it was more dramatic than American animation and was used to create fantastical and outlandish designs. But the problem with Japanese cartoons is they were created for Japanese audiences, the storylines either being mature in tone or needing in-depth knowledge of Japanese manga to support the complex plots. Japanese cartoons had to be repackaged and repurposed for Western audiences. But what if there was a

show that could combine the best of both, fusing the muscle of American story-telling with the finesse of Japanese animation?

That's how ThunderCats was born. Starring the flame-haired Lion-O, it had the eccentric, fantastical design of Japanese animation and the clear, punchy story-telling and production of American cartoons. The show was animated by Japan's Pacific Animation Corporation but everything else was handled in the United States, from the writing to the voice-acting. Just like the show itself was anchored around the explosive clash between sci-fi and fantasy elements, ThunderCats brought the strengths of Western and Eastern cartoons hurtling together.

Not that having the best of both worlds made ThunderCats an easy cartoon for Rankin-Bass Animated Entertainment to oversee. The company was based in New York, and there weren't many animated series based on the East Coast of the US at the time. It meant scriptwriters were hard to find, especially those who'd respond to the call for this strange new cartoon. Rankin-Bass even gave peripheral staff like audio engineers a crack at writing the scripts. In the meantime, cultural differences made it difficult for the Americans and Japanese to work together. Often, the Japanese studio would agree to a request even though they knew it would be impossible, owing to their cultural aversion to saying no. They also rankled whenever they'd see 'horde' in the scripts, as they didn't like drawing big crowds. But the unusual partnership ultimately proved a successful one when ThunderCats finally made its debut.

## GOING GLOBAL

In a time when My Little Pony & Friends and The New Scooby-Doo Mysteries were making their bow, it doesn't take a genius to work out why ThunderCats had an immediate impact. Cat-like humanoids versus the creepy mummified Mumm-Ra? It burst off the screen with creativity and imagination oozing from every pore, blowing away the other cartoons it was

competing against on Saturday mornings. Even the intro was a huge statement of intent – full of explosive action, backed by a bombastic theme tune that rattled around in your head long after the cartoon started.

Led by Lion-O, the ThunderCats are forced to flee their dying home world of Thundera. The Mutants of Plun-Darr, under Mumm-Ra's command, want to steal the Sword of Omens from the group, which contains the legendary Eye of Thundera. A series of events sees the ThunderCats versus Mumm-Ra battle take place on Third Earth, but the how and why almost became irrelevant. What was important was the ThunderCats were the good guys, Mumm-Ra and the Mutants were the bad guys, and each episode revealed more about the mysteries of Third Earth, where the two sides battle in amazingly named places like the Whirlpool of Despair.

Just like the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon, *ThunderCats*' huge cast meant everyone had a favourite. Some were drawn to the raw speed of Cheetara, Tygra's whip skills made his action scenes the most exciting, while others admired the raw power and technical wizardry of Panthro (even his fear of bats made him strangely likeable). Then there was leader Lion-O. Rather than being the typical hero that viewers could relate to, Lion-O was different. He had wild, untamed flame-coloured hair like a lion, a bright blue leotard and tanned skin.

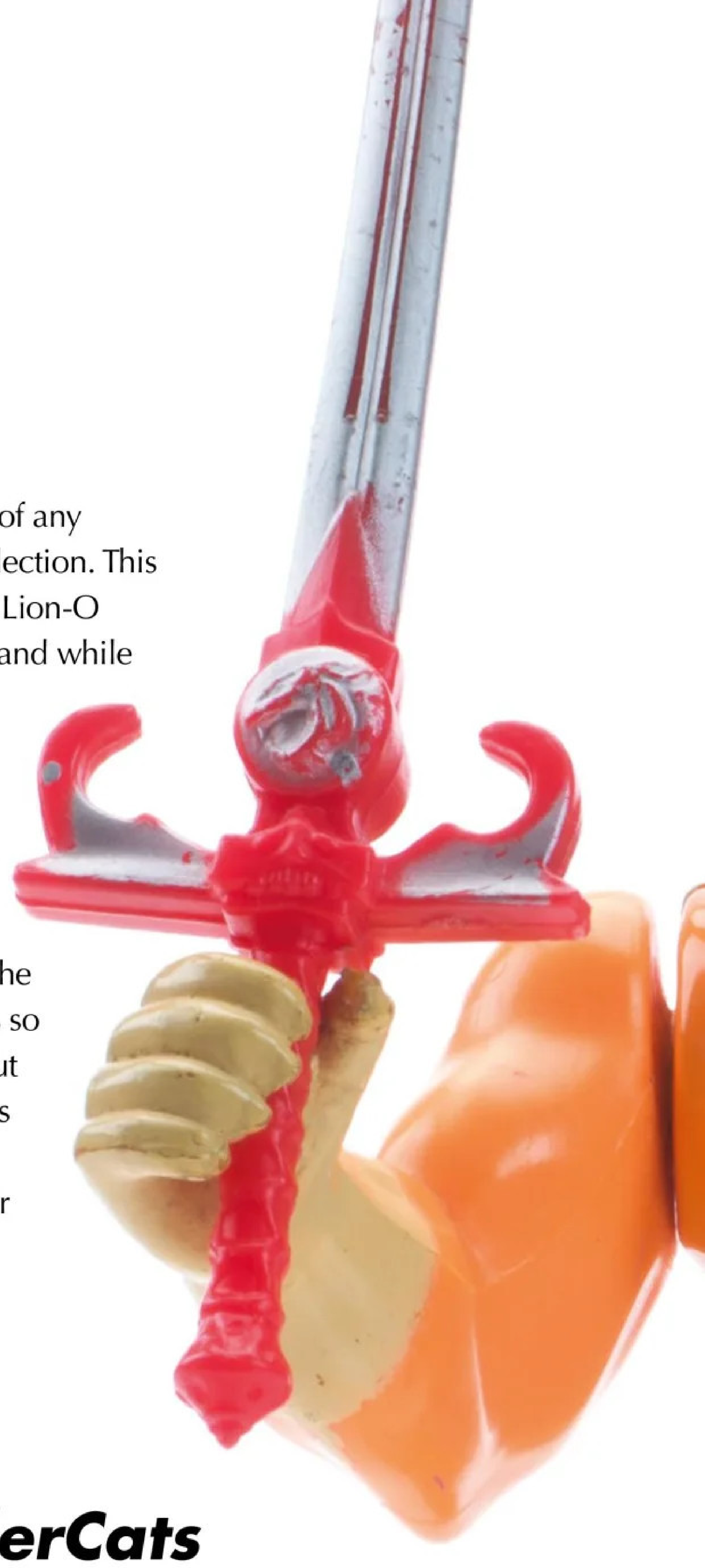
The storylines were also positive and each episode imparted a moral lesson, making *ThunderCats* a cartoon parents would be happy letting their kids watch. A psychologist was even brought in to review the scripts, writing brief reports on the first 65 episodes for commissioning bosses to read. As *ThunderCats* went from strength to strength, its popularity exploded in unusual and unexpected ways. Official records in the US showed that for the first time ever, some parents even called their baby daughters Cheetara. Action for Children's Television lobbied for the cartoon to be removed from the air, arguing that it was little more than a disguised toy commercial and its influence over children was too great. *ThunderCats* even became a stage play in the US.

## COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Ask anyone you know to recall something from the '80s and *ThunderCats* is one of the first answers that will come up. Even though it's competing with other memorable cartoons, *ThunderCats* remains one of the most symbolic of the '80s, Lion-O being one of the iconic images from that era. Why? Because *ThunderCats* belongs exclusively to the '80s.

While the likes of Danger Mouse have had recent successful reboots and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles now has CGI movies dominating the big screen, *ThunderCats* remains very much of its time – though a 2011 reboot arrived without much fanfare and quietly faded away when toy sales proved disappointing.

ThunderCats also has a lot of memorable hooks that fans can recall – the flame-haired Lion-O, the dazzling animation, the "Thunder, Thunder, Thunder, ThunderCats!" battle cry of its theme tune. But its iconic logo has helped it endure more than most



### The Sword of Omens

the centrepiece of any ThunderCats collection. This is the sword that Lion-O himself wielded and while convincing parents to let you grow your hair out and dye it orange was a tall order, asking them for the Sword of Omens so you could live out your ThunderCats adventures seemed like a fair compromise.

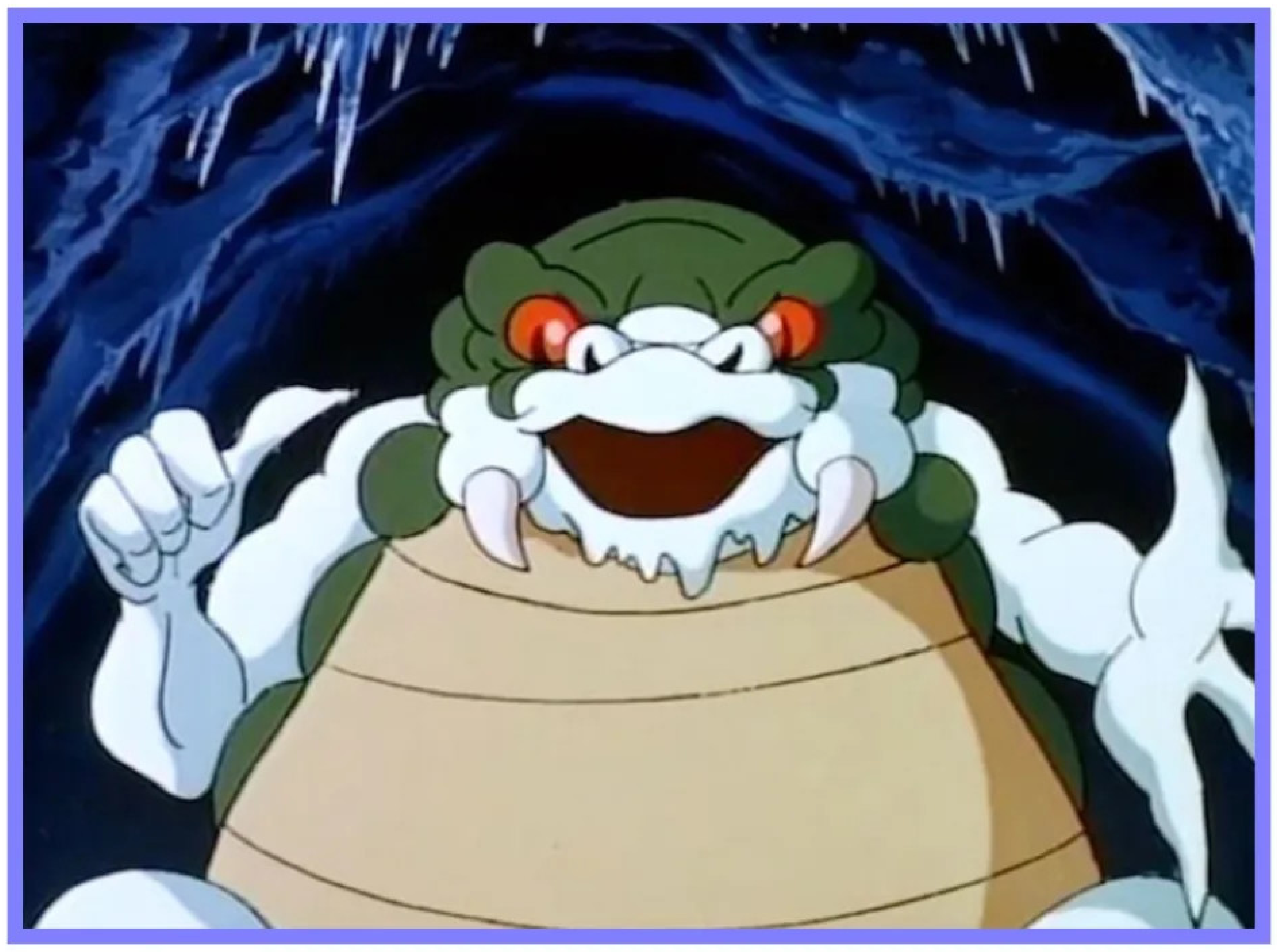
> **"ThunderCats were the good guys, Mumm-Ra and the Mutants were the bad guys"**

### An iconic logo

The ThunderCats logo is the most recognisable imagery from the cartoon. More so than Lion-O's wild design, even. The ThunderCats logo dominated their clothing, the Sword of Omens, the intro, it was *everywhere* you looked in the cartoon. So it's little surprise that the most common ThunderCats collector's item is a T-shirt with the logo itself on. It's almost an expected sight at comic conventions these days and it will likely endure for many decades to come, as it's the one of the key items of memorabilia for anyone wanting to celebrate their '80s childhood.

**Lion-O**

One of the most iconic toys of the '80s, everyone wanted the figurine of leader Lion-O. He had his Sword of Omens and bendable joints, so you could create action poses. It was such a popular toy that it's still being manufactured now, in almost exactly the same way it was back when it was first released.



**Mad Bubbler**

For those who are serious ThunderCats collectors, Mad Bubbler is the holy grail. This toy was never officially released, being cancelled before it hit the shelves. However, some prototypes exist and they change hands for up to $25,000. Not bad for a toy that spits out bubbles…

from that era. Just like the Transformers Autobots or Decepticons logo stokes nostalgic fires within those who grew up alongside the combat vehicles on Saturday morning TV, the snarling, fanged ThunderCats logo is just as memorable as the cartoon. That's why the most common collector's item you'll see today is a ThunderCats T-shirt with the metallic logo in the middle. Simple. Easy. Iconic. Nostalgic.

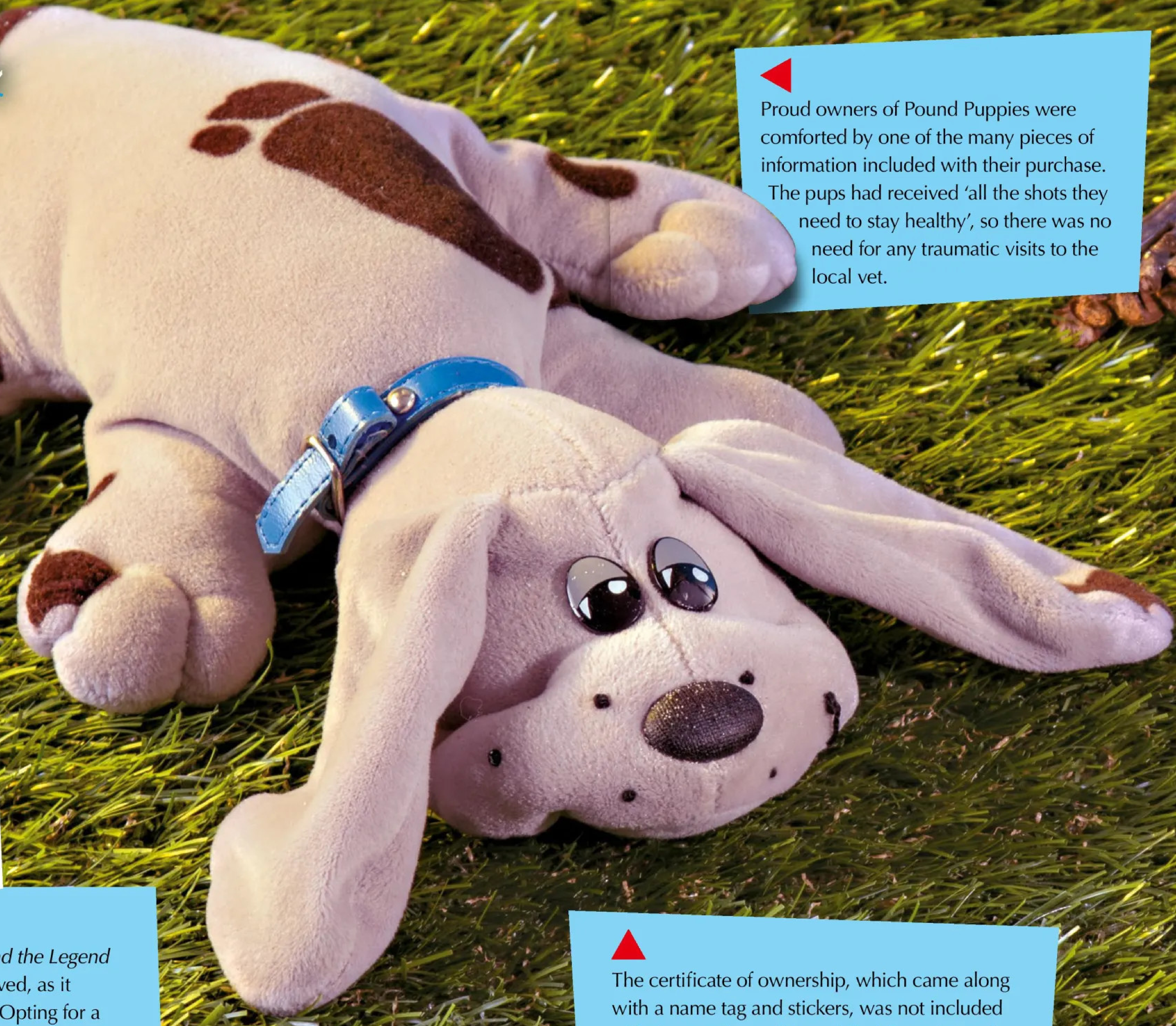
For collectors who want to delve further than just T-shirts, ThunderCats was also a toy paradise. The heroics of Lion-O, Cheetara and Panthro made them obvious choices for fans of the show, but the toy line also extended to the characters like Wilykit and Wilykat, and even the Snarf who was as loathed as he was loved.

It wasn't just that the main cast was distinct and eye-catching that made ThunderCats so appealing to collectors. It's also that new characters were regularly added to the show, created as potential toys that could be sold to fans. There were even toys created for characters who never made the cartoon itself, such as Stinger. The toy line didn't just end in the '80s either, as ThunderCats figures have even crossed over into the recent Funko Pop craze – proof of how popular they are as collector's items and how relevant they've managed to remain, even after all these years.

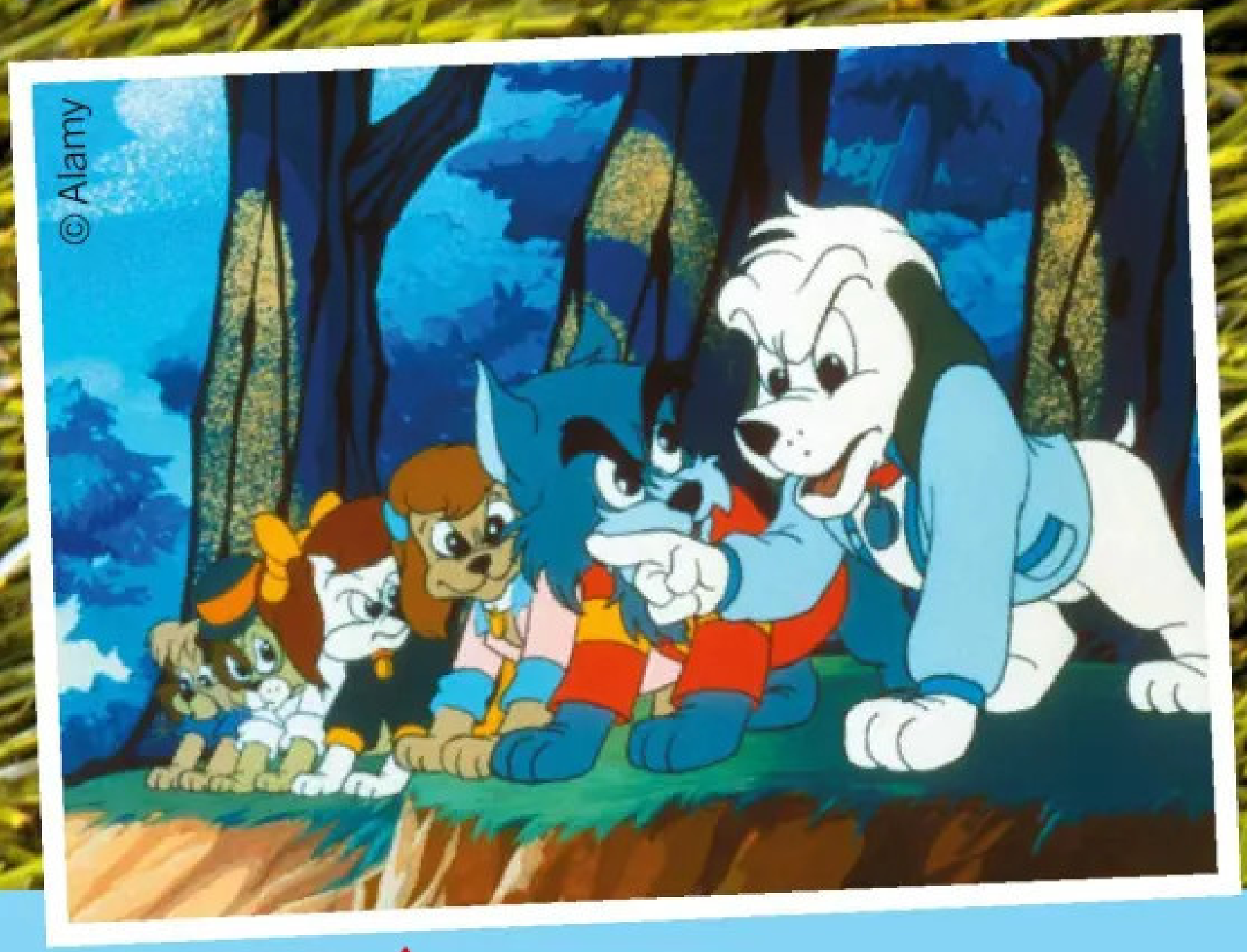
# POUND PUPPIES

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Irwin Toy/ Tonka
**First released:** 1984
**Expect to pay:** £15



Proud owners of Pound Puppies were comforted by one of the many pieces of information included with their purchase. The pups had received 'all the shots they need to stay healthy', so there was no need for any traumatic visits to the local vet.



© Alamy

The 1988 film *Pound Puppies and the Legend of Big Paw* was not so well received, as it was blighted by inconsistencies. Opting for a standalone story, rather than continuing that from the earlier TV show, the film confused fans and critics alike, and performed poorly at the box office.

The certificate of ownership, which came along with a name tag and stickers, was not included with the purchase of the original Pound Puppies. Kids had to persuade parents to send off extra money for these embellishments, which seems a pretty cynical form of upselling.

Pound Puppies played on the same protective/nurturing instinct tapped into by other classic '80s toys such as the Cabbage Patch Kids and Monchhichi. They also employed some of the same sales gimmicks – kids could send off for an ownership certificate, in much the same way that Cabbage Patch Kids came with 'adoption' papers.

Pound Puppies also had care instructions included, to further stimulate that nurturing instinct in children, who were informed that their pups needed a bath every now and then, did not enjoy rough play, and craved hugs and love. What child could resist? The big-eyed expressions on their faces, as the pups hung out of the front of their kennel-shaped boxes, were enough to seal the deal in most cases.

The invention of Ohio factory worker Mike Bowling, the pooches were initially produced by Irwin Toy, but it was when Tonka took over the brand that it started to take off, and Christmas 1985 was a familiar story of parents hunting desperately for the toy their children wanted most of all.

The ultimate seal of approval in the United States came when the fast-food chain Hardee's introduced a line of pint-sized Pound Puppies for its children's menu.

In the UK, production was briefly handled by Hornby, and the brand went on to change hands many times over the following years, with Galoob, Mary Meyer, Jakks Pacific, Mattel, Hasbro and Flair all having a go and meeting with varying levels of success.

You're not a proper toy craze if you don't have a TV tie-in. Following a one-off special in 1985, the Pound Puppies got their own animated series the following year. Hasbro also produced three seasons of a critically acclaimed cartoon, starting in 2010, which included the vocal talents of major actors such as M Emmet Walsh and René Auberjonois.

> ***"What child could resist? The big-eyed expressions on their faces, as the pups hung out of their boxes were enough to seal the deal in most cases"***

## THE LEGACY

Following a lengthy hiatus from 1989 to 1996, the Pound Puppies reappeared under the Galoob label, but as miniaturised collectibles. Jakks Pacific introduced sound and motion effects (the pups barked and wagged their tails) in 2001, but the 2008 incarnation, from Flair, is the favourite of many thanks to the massive size of the pups – no less than 60 centimetres in length. The latest incarnation of the brand appeared in 2014, from Funrise, but the pups are not currently in production.

# FISHER-PRICE ROLLER SKATES

The fact that children grow so quickly is one of the problems faced by anyone buying toys for the little ones in their family. Fisher-Price came up with a sympathetic solution in 1984, releasing a set of children's roller skates that could actually grow along with the child.

The original Fisher-Price Roller Skates were produced in bright, eye-catching plastic and featured several safety features for learner skaters. First of all, there was the option to introduce the child to the fun (and perils) of roller skating via a switch, which could be set to disable backward skating. This could then be deactivated when a child had mastered forward movement and was ready to venture into reverse skating.

There were also hard, plastic protectors for heels and toes, as well as front and rear stoppers for slowing down or stopping when things got a bit hairy. The real ace up the sleeve, however, was the ability to adjust the skates, lengthening them as a child grew. With an ability to fit feet of UK sizes six to 12 (making them suitable for ages three to around six years old), this feature greatly enhanced the longevity of the skates.

In 1989, the skates were rechristened the '1-2-3 Roller Skates'. The wheels could be locked completely for introductory tottering around, while a 123 logo was added to the knob used to adjust the size of the skates to let you know you had the updated design.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Fisher-Price
**First released:** 1984
**Expect to pay:** £10

Learning how to fasten buckles or laces is almost as daunting for a child as learning to skate, so Fisher-Price included Velcro fastenings to make things easy for kids at the lower end of the target age range.

# FISHER-PRICE ROLLER SKATES

The attention to safety features was notable in an age where kids would be sent out on their roller skates without helmet or knee pads. Fisher-Price even ran an advert boasting about the durability of its toys, including the 1-2-3 Roller Skates, while making no mention of the delicate kids hurtling around on them.

TV adverts are notable for their brash claims, and in 1984 a delighted mother with two skating kids claimed that 'Fisher-Price just reinvented the wheel'. Although forward-thinking in many ways, the 1-2-3 Roller Skates weren't quite that revolutionary.

## THE LEGACY

The idea proved popular and 1-2-3 Roller Skates are still available. Showing the company is able to keep up with changing trends, you can also now get adjustable inline skates. Some modern incarnations offer more protection, with high-top construction to support the ankle, and there are also licensed versions, including a pink Barbie set. The 'growing with the child' concept has also been adopted in other areas, including ride-on toys.

The Fisher-Price skates had the same design for both left and right feet. While this meant kids didn't have to stress about putting the correct one on each foot, it didn't exactly make them comfortable. Shaped left and right skates were finally introduced in 1993.

# 50 DEFINING SHOWS OF THE '80s

## The '80s provided a wealth of TV dramas, comedies, soaps and kids' shows that would be the talk of schools and workplaces the next day

In television during the '80s, producers began to reign supreme, punching out big-hitting, high-concept shows that straddled the line between being formulaic and experimental. In doing so, they provided entertaining distractions from the worries of the Cold War, while often reflecting the Reagan/Thatcher era in which they were being made.

This was certainly the case in the US where Stephen J Cannell and Michael Mann were closely linked with their popular flagships *The A-Team* and *Miami Vice* – shows that leant different slants to buddy dramas. It was also true of Steven Bochco whose swaggering, chaotic *Hill Street Blues* broke with precedent. Most pushed hard against the limitations of the medium at the time, and redefined expectations. *Cagney & Lacey* heralded the first female buddy-cop duo, sitcoms became more topical, dramas were unafraid of tackling issues, and real stuntmen-driven action proved infinitely more satisfying as they upped the ante. Shows such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty* would keep people hooked with complicated running stories.

But if they were hugely glossy affairs, then the British were producing an antidote with more down-to-earth offers. Children were also treated to shows featuring memorable, charming puppets, and short cartoons with catchy theme tunes that live long in the memory. But millions tuned in. For in an era of fewer channels and alternatives, programmes had to make an impact. And boy did they.

© Getty

## Airwolf

1984-1987

1 Right from the get-go, *Airwolf* was packed with fast-flying action, relentless adventure, stirring music, eye-piercing explosions and fierce firepower – and that was before the show's opening credits had even ended. Starring a top-spec helicopter and the achingly cool-named US Army captain Stringfellow Hawke, this Cold War-themed series was pure '80s machismo.

## ALF

1986-1990

2 This spoof of Steven Spielberg's *E.T.* turned a furry, snout-faced, cat-eating Alien Life Form puppet (aka ALF) into a huge, gloriously flawed star. Popular with kids and, as it turned out, large numbers of Germans, he was slovenly, sarcastic and gluttonous, and his arrival from the planet Melmac also spawned an animated series, comics and trading cards.

## The Amazing Adventures of Morph

1980-1981

3 In 1977, Morph became Aardman Animations' first professional production for the children's programme *Take Hart*, but the claymation character went on to star in his own spin-off show on the BBC in 1980. He'd pop out of a wooden box and jabber through five-minute adventures narrated by Tony Hart.

## Button Moon

1980-1988

4 Nobody watched *Button Moon* for its cutting-edge puppetry. But they were certainly charmed by characters such as Mr Spoon, Mrs Spoon, Tina Tea-Spoon and Eggbert – all of whom were created out of kitchen utensils and loved to journey to a big button in the sky aboard a logo-covered Heinz baked beans tin.

## Cagney & Lacey

1982-1988

5 CBS sought to pull the plug on *Cagney & Lacey* in 1983, but the iconic police drama about two female police detectives in New York was saved by protesting viewers. Known for breaking fresh ground in a traditionally male-dominated field, the show highlighted real working women while dealing frankly with both their professional and home lives.

## Cheers

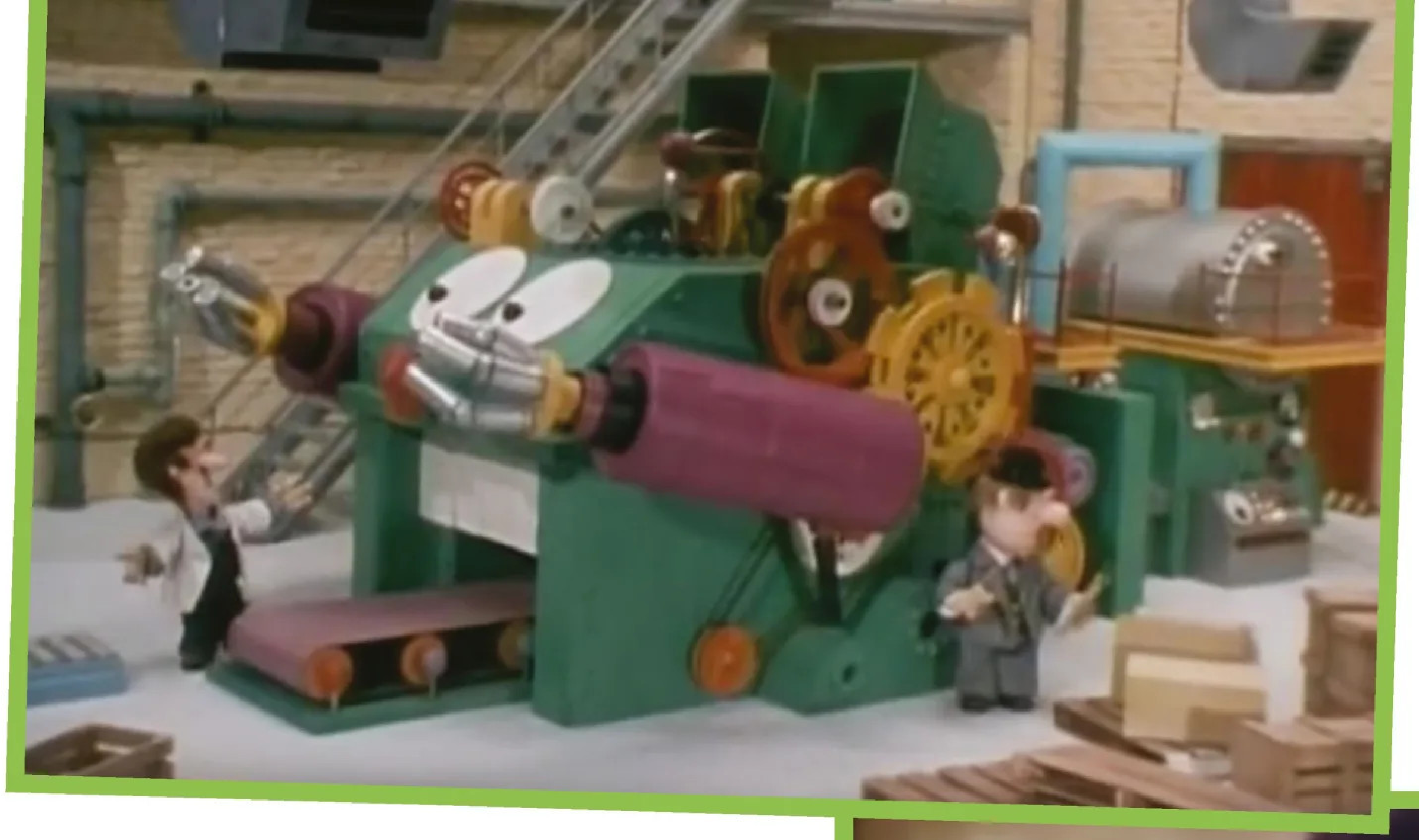
1982-1993

6 In the Boston bar where everybody knew your name, Sam Malone – played by Ted Danson – greeted a host of socialising locals (while having a love-hate relationship with waitress Diane) in one of the most popular US sitcoms of all time. It really hit its stride in 1990, by which time it had become one of comedy's most influential shows.

## Cockleshell Bay

1980-1986

7 Created by the British animation studio Cosgrove Hall and aired at lunchtimes on ITV, *Cockleshell Bay* was a gentle look at seaside life, proving kids' TV need not be manic or fast-paced. Young Robin and Rosie Cockle, who lived in a guest house called the Bucket and Spade, would simply use their imaginations in familiar settings, leading to many fun and engaging situations.



## Bertha ▲

1985-1986

**8** This stop-motion animated series charmed viewers for all the right reasons, thanks to a lovely big-grinned machine called Bertha that could make pretty much any item needed. Located in the Spottiswood Factory, it was narrated like so many '80s shows, and it had an infectiously catchy theme tune, too.

## Dallas

1978-1991

**9** One of the biggest shows of the '80s, *Dallas* mixed power, sex, money and oil but it was as avidly viewed for its glamorous women as it was for the storylines. Cliffhangers, deaths, divorces, accidents, mental institutions and larger-than-life characters, *Dallas* had it all.

## ▼ Diff'rent Strokes

1978-1986

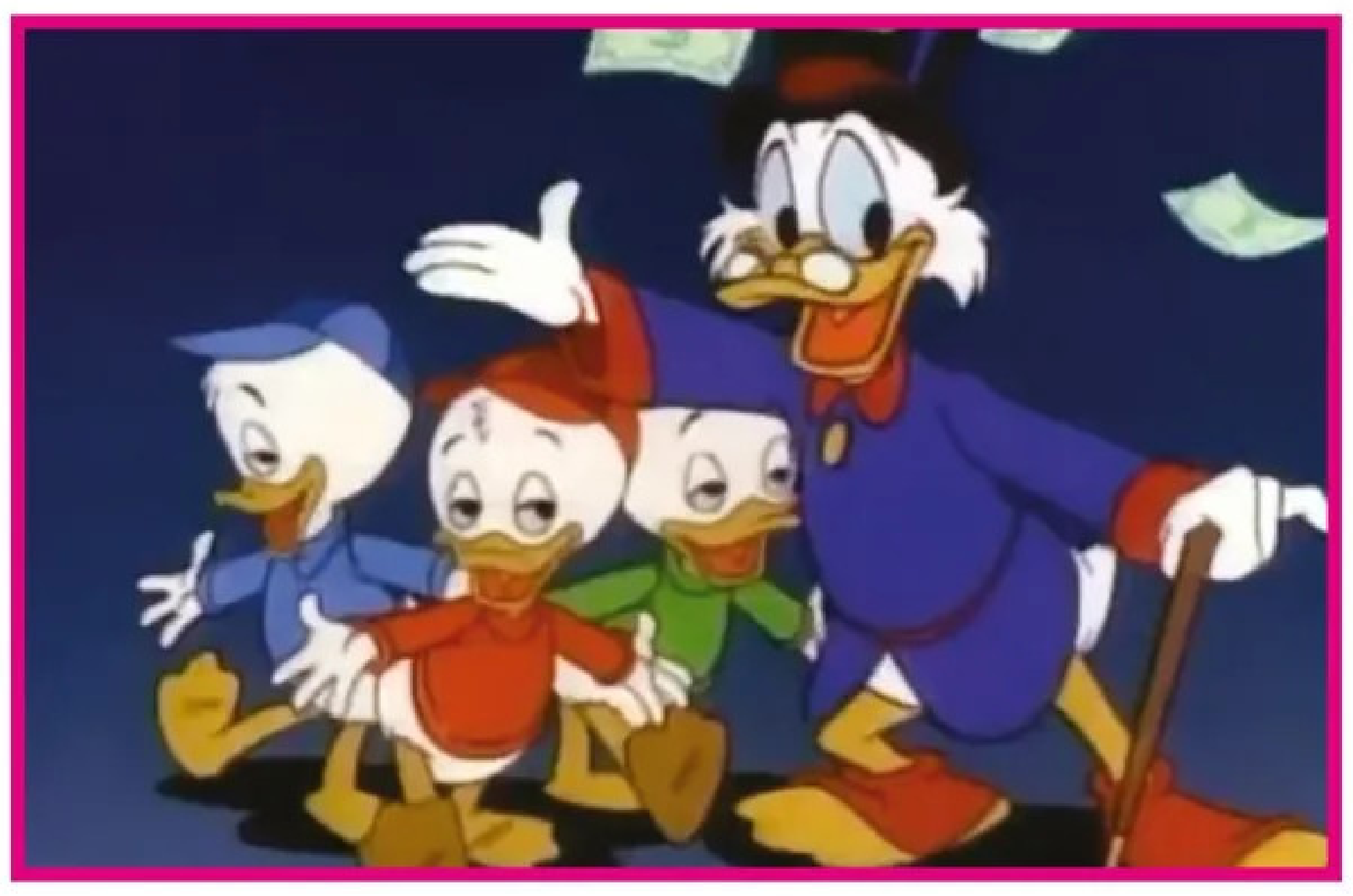
**10** African-American child star Gary Coleman was given the perfect vehicle for his undoubted talent – a hilarious sitcom that sought to show that black and white people could live together as a family. As Arnold Jackson, his catchphrase "Whatcha talking about, Willis?" caught on, but the show's attempts to tackle issues such as racism and child sexual abuse were just as standout.

> ***"Cliffhangers, deaths, divorces, accidents, mental institutions and larger-than-life characters, Dallas had it all"***

## DuckTales

1987-1990

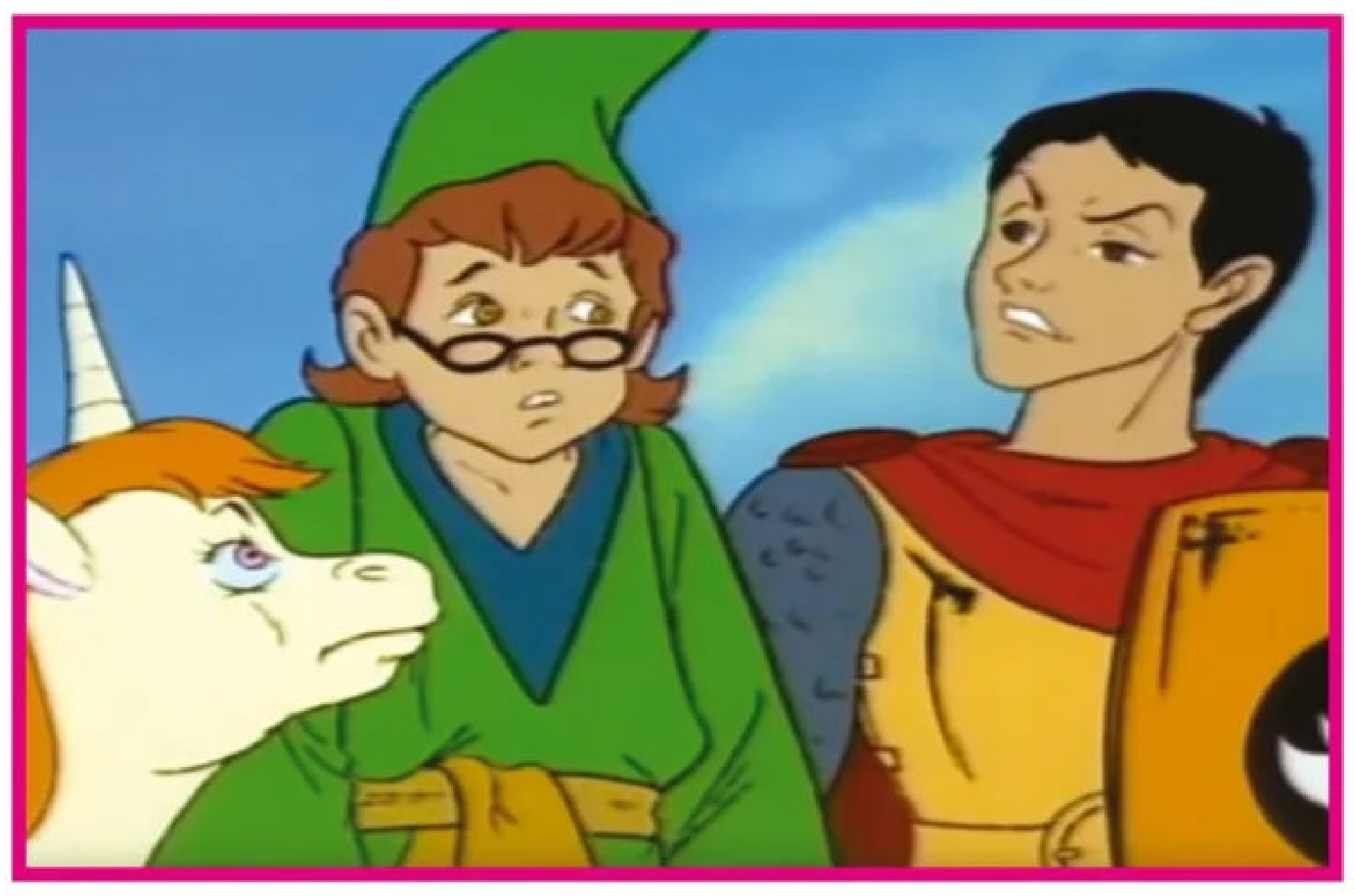
**11** Disney's movie aspirations had taken a battering as the '80s wore on (only resurfacing with the release of *The Little Mermaid* in 1989), but *DuckTales* more than made up for it. Kicking off with a catchy theme tune, it introduced wealthy Scrooge McDuck and his adventurous nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie, and featured multiple nods to pop culture.



## Dungeons & Dragons

1983-1985

**12** Unlike many cartoons of the decade, *Dungeons & Dragons* didn't start with a toy line, although one was later created. Instead, it concentrated on its fantasy world of myths and legends filled with relatable characters and challenges from a Yoda-like Dungeon Master. There was even an '80s-style comedy sidekick in Uni the unicorn.



## Dynasty

1981-1989

**13** Joan Collins' career had nosedived in the '70s, but she became a household name in a show that became synonymous with clothes to die for, big hair and shoulder pads. *Dynasty* captured the zeitgeist as it battled against *Dallas* for prime-time soap supremacy, and in 1985 spawned a spin-off series called *The Colbys*.

## Emu's World / Emu's All Live Pink Windmill Show

1982-1988

14 Living in a pink windmill with a bunch of singing and dancing kids, a nightmare neighbour in Grotbags and his hand stuck up a bird's bottom, Rod Hull nevertheless had a big smile on his face. Then again, the unpredictable puppet, Emu, flourished on ITV in the '80s with three back-to-back shows, wrapping up with *EMU-TV* in 1989.

## Family Ties

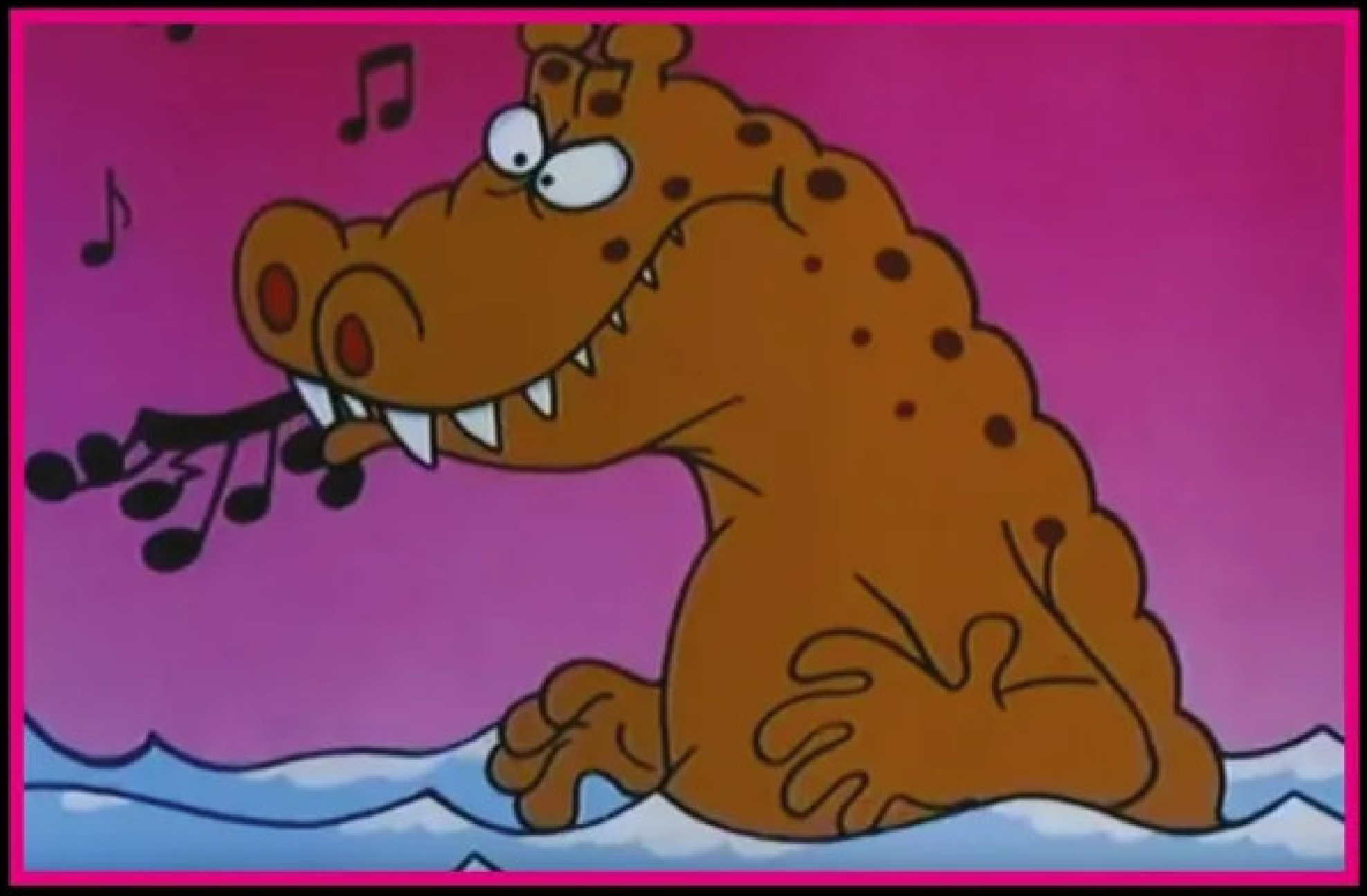
1982-1989

15 Michael J Fox's star potential was so stark, his Reagan-loving young Republican character, Alex P Keaton, in *Family Ties* quickly took centre stage. In a show exploring the decade's conservatism, he helped breathe new life into nuclear-family sitcoms, and raised issues and laughs to such an extent that a third of Americans tuned in.

## The Family-Ness

1984-1985

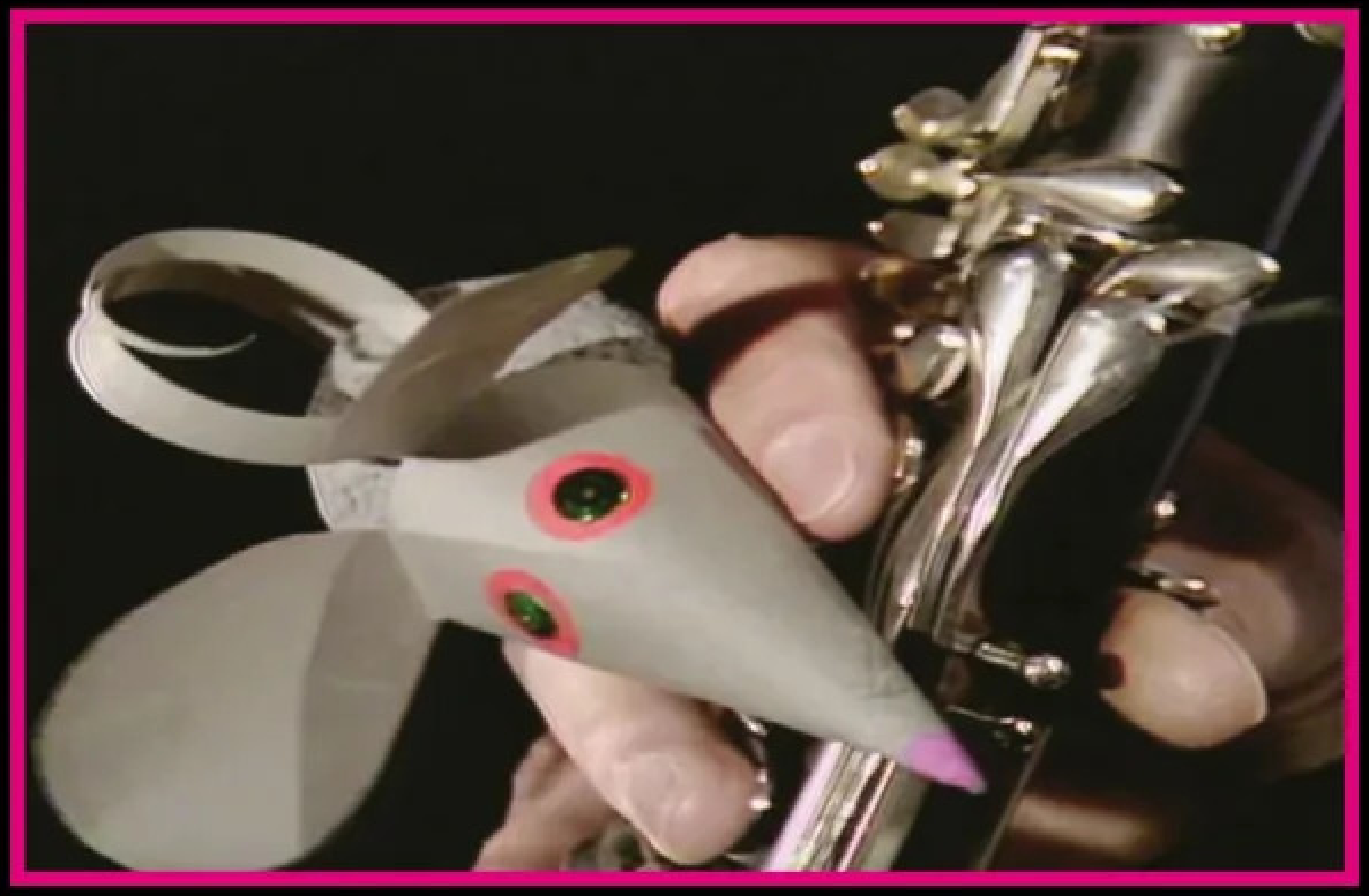
16 Cartoonist Peter Maddock made great waves with *Penny Crayon* and *Jimbo and the Jet Set*, but *The Family-Ness* stood out the most. It had a tremendously catchy theme tune, and the show's closing song, *You'll Never Find a Nessie in the Zoo*, was even released as a single – although it failed to make the Top 40.



## Fingermouse

1985-1986

17 Spun out of the 1972's *Fingerbobs* series and lasting for just one series of 15-minute episodes, you get the sense that children would not be so accepting of *Fingermouse* today. After all, it was little more than a paper puppet on a man's finger playing musical instruments, but it sure struck a chord back then.



## Going Live!

1987-1993

18 Taking Phillip Schofield out of the CBBC broom cupboard and pairing him with *Saturday Superstore*'s Sarah Greene was an inspired move, but it was the swing-your-pants comedy duo Trevor and Simon who upped the anarchy. It produced a must-watch kids' morning TV show packed with energy. They Double Dared you not to miss it.

## Hartbeat

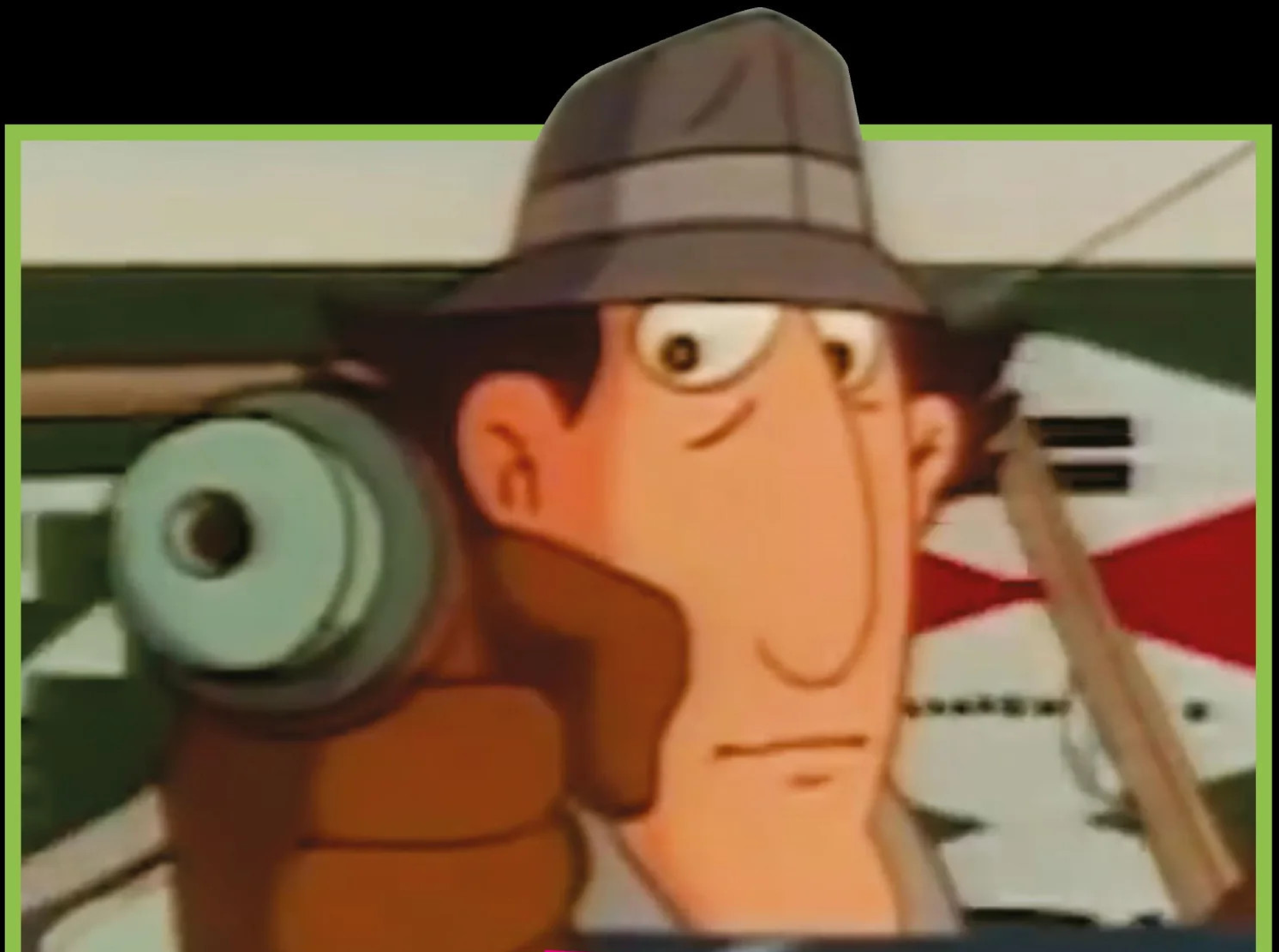
1984-1993

19 Picking up where *Take Hart* had left off, this arts programme encouraged children to be creative. Drawing on the immense talents of artist and presenter Tony Hart, who had been a *Blue Peter* regular (and the creator of the ship logo), it showcased the work of its young viewers, and featured cameos from the animated Plasticine character Morph.

## Hill Street Blues

1981-1987

20 Produced at a time when US network dramas were losing their way, this critically acclaimed show proved highly innovative and a forerunner for quality TV. It featured a huge ensemble cast, characters who developed deep interpersonal relationships over time, and episodes packed with multiple storylines that could run on.



## Inspector Gadget

1983-1986

21 Given its futuristic sci-fi vibe, perhaps it was fitting that this cartoon became the first animated TV series to be presented in stereo sound. Featuring everyone's favourite cyborg police inspector and his 'Go Go Gadget' catchphrase, it was formulaic yet its blend of action fiction and comedy was unusual for the time.

KNIGHT RIDER

## Jonny Briggs

1985-1987

22 Unmistakably northern, *Jonny Briggs* brought kitchen-sink drama to children's television. It revolved around the adventures of a put-upon kid who lived with his mum and dad, his sister Rita, brothers Albert and Humphrey, and family dog Razzle. Acclaimed trombonist Colin Buchanan recorded the very fitting and memorable theme tune, which was actually written in 1936.

## Jossy's Giants

1986-1987

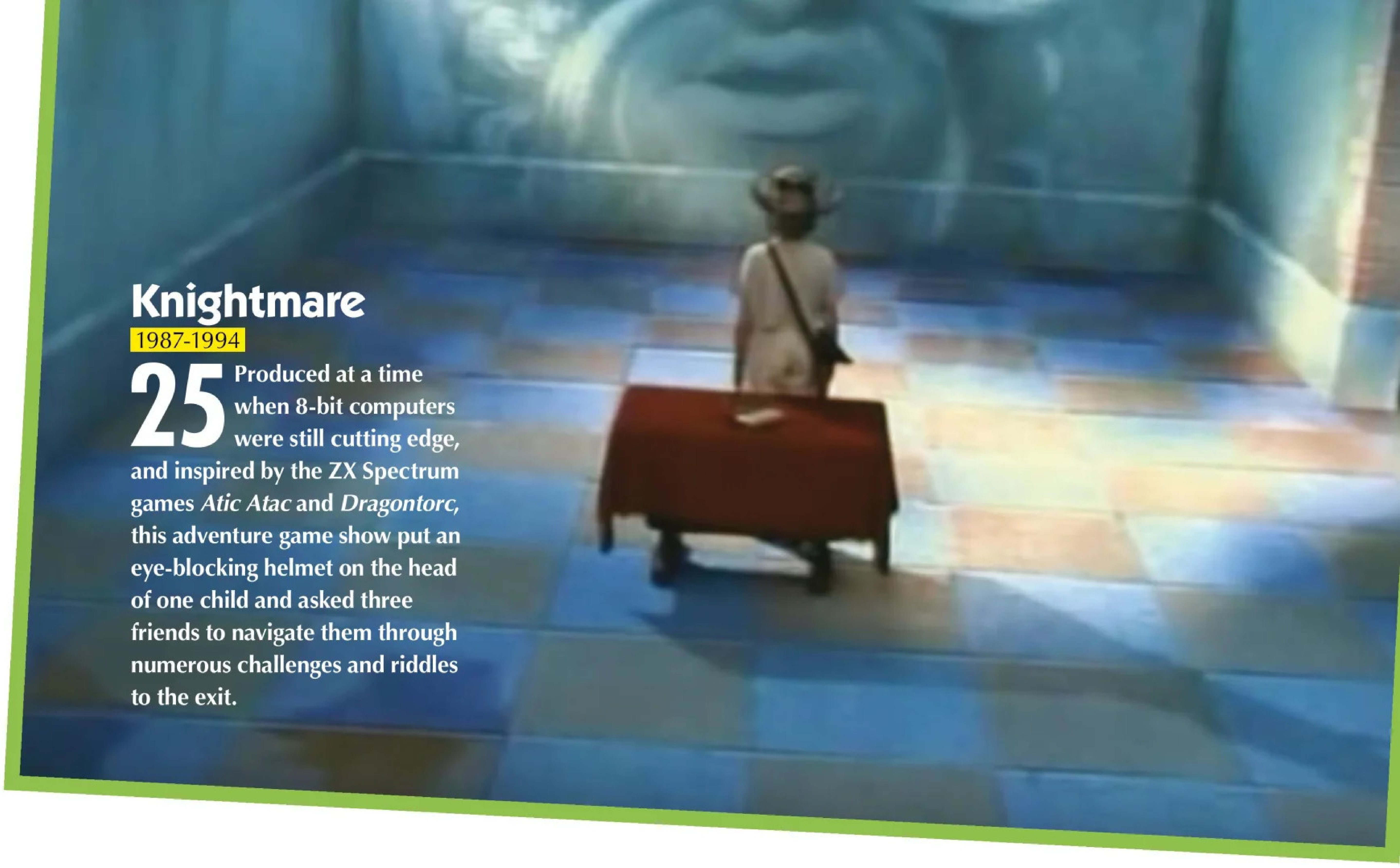
23 Shot in an industrially declining Manchester a few years before the arrival of the glamour and glitz of the Premier League, and at a time when neighbouring Merseyside was soaking up the footballing honours, this soccer-themed comedy saw a fictional former Newcastle footballer take charge of boys' team the Glipton Grasshoppers. It included cameos from top players such as Bryan Robson and Bobby Charlton.

## Knight Rider

1982-1986

24 Producer Glen A Larson rode in on the back of *Battlestar Galactica* and *Magnum P.I.* with a blockbuster action crime drama that gave David Hasselhoff his big break as Michael Knight and did the '80s thing of turning a vehicle into the main star. This time, a Pontiac Firebird Trans Am became KITT (Knight Industries Two Thousand), an artificially intelligent and nearly indestructible car.

**"This adventure game show put an eye-blocking helmet on the head of one child and asked three friends to navigate them through numerous challenges"**



## Knightmare

1987-1994

**25** Produced at a time when 8-bit computers were still cutting edge, and inspired by the ZX Spectrum games *Atic Atac* and *Dragontorc*, this adventure game show put an eye-blocking helmet on the head of one child and asked three friends to navigate them through numerous challenges and riddles to the exit.

## Magnum P.I.

1980-1988

**26** Mike Post had a reputation for producing great theme tunes – he worked on the songs for *The A-Team*, *Hill Street Blues* and *The Rockford Files*, too. *Magnum P.I.*'s tune went to number 25 in the US charts, but the crime drama starring a private investigator was a belter, too. Oh, and Tom Selleck's moustache was a modern masterpiece.

## Manimal

1983

**27** NBC went through a phase of seeking out high-concept hits in the '80s. It had already struck gold with *The A-Team* and *Knight Rider* when it believed a wealthy crime-fighting doctor who could shapeshift into any animal he wanted would become a potential hit. It didn't at the time but it's cult viewing now.

## Miami Vice

1984-1989

**28** It's easy to underestimate the impact *Miami Vice* had on '80s culture. As a glossy, expensively produced crime drama starring two undercover Miami detectives, it was inspired by New Wave culture. But it also showcased great songs, boosted Miami tourism, and saw sales of unconstructed blazers and pastel-coloured clothing soar.

## Moonlighting

1985-1989

**29** Before he scrambled around ventilation shafts in a bloodied vest, Bruce Willis starred in a series of 'mini movies' for TV by taking a main role in *Moonlighting* alongside Cybill Shepherd. It pioneered the concept of the comedy drama, and frequently broke the fourth wall with references to the show, crew and network.

## Murder, She Wrote

1984-1996

**30** As a major star of the stage, Angela Lansbury finally landed her dream TV role as mystery writer and amateur detective Jessica Fletcher when she was 58. She sure made the most of it, with 264 episodes and four TV movies, earning her a place in the Guinness World Records as the most prolific amateur sleuth.

## Neighbours

1985-present

**31** Australian soaps such as *Sons and Daughters* tended to pad out the UK's daytime schedules. *Neighbours* found itself in the 5.35pm slot after Children's BBC, making it a sunny teatime treat. The soap introduced Jason Donovan as Scott Robinson, and Kylie Minogue as Charlene Mitchell. Their 1987 wedding attracted 19.6 million UK viewers.

## No. 73

1982-1988

**32** ITV tended to play second fiddle to the BBC in the Saturday morning TV stakes, but the long-running *No. 73* starring Sandi Toksvig and Neil Buchanan made the effort of turning over worthwhile. It was mostly improvised, making use of the hosts' theatre background. Papier-mâché-headed Frank Sidebottom also appeared.

## Only Fools and Horses

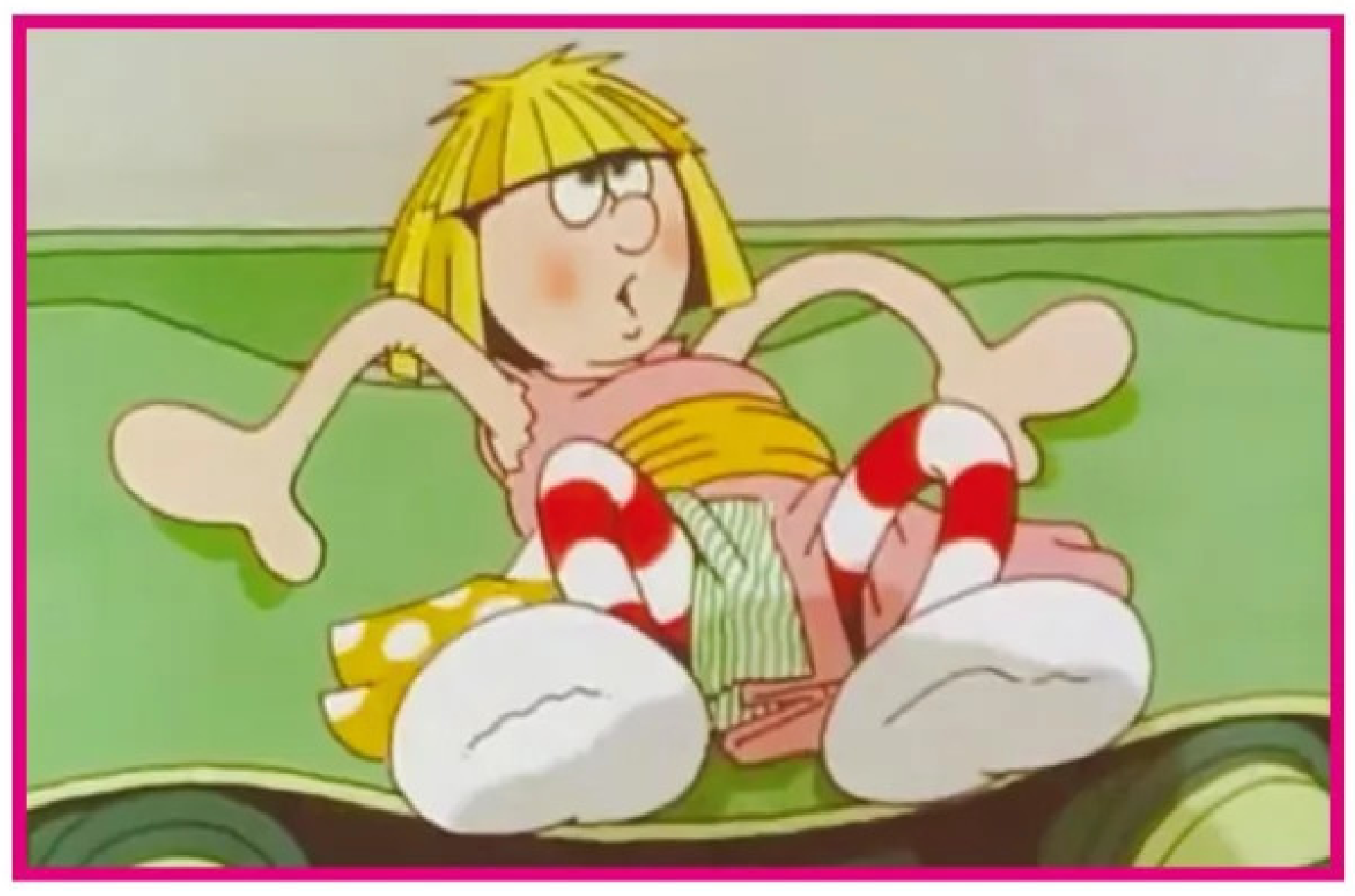
1981-2003

**33** Reflecting the Thatcherite free market philosophy of the time and following the fortunes of a working-class market trader with aspirations beyond his roots, *Only Fools and Horses* introduced the world to Del Boy, one of TV's best-loved comedy characters. David Jason's character so desperately wanted to be a Yuppie, a term also coined in the '80s.

## The Raggy Dolls

1986-1994

**34** The '80s saw many people strive for perfection and success, marking it as a decade of winners and losers to a great extent. Into that came *The Raggy Dolls*, a cartoon that followed the adventures of soft toys thrown into the reject bin. Coming to life, they taught children to think positively about disabilities and be kind to one another.



## Rentaghost

1976-1984

**35** The *Rentaghost* of the '80s was markedly different to that of the earlier decade: less bleak and dark humoured, it lit the screen with gaudy characters, such as the pantomime horse Dobbin, and Hazel the McWitch. The spooks and ghouls would raise the spirits of viewers thanks to their incompetency.

## Roland Rat (on TV-am)

1983-1985

**36** Roland Rat arguably saved the UK breakfast TV network TV-am, proving so popular that ratings soared from 100,000 to 1.8 million. He soon got a regular 25-minute slot during school holidays from 9am, driving around various towns in a pink Ford Anglia, before being poached by the BBC in 1985.

## The Russ Abbot Madhouse

1980-1985

**37** Russ Abbot became known to millions as an all-round entertainer having started his career as a singer and drummer in his band, the Black Abbots. His *Madhouse* on ITV was a series of sketches packed with characters including Basildon Bond, Cooperman and C. U. Jimmy. The BBC ran the show for a further eight series from 1986.

## Spitting Image

1984-1996

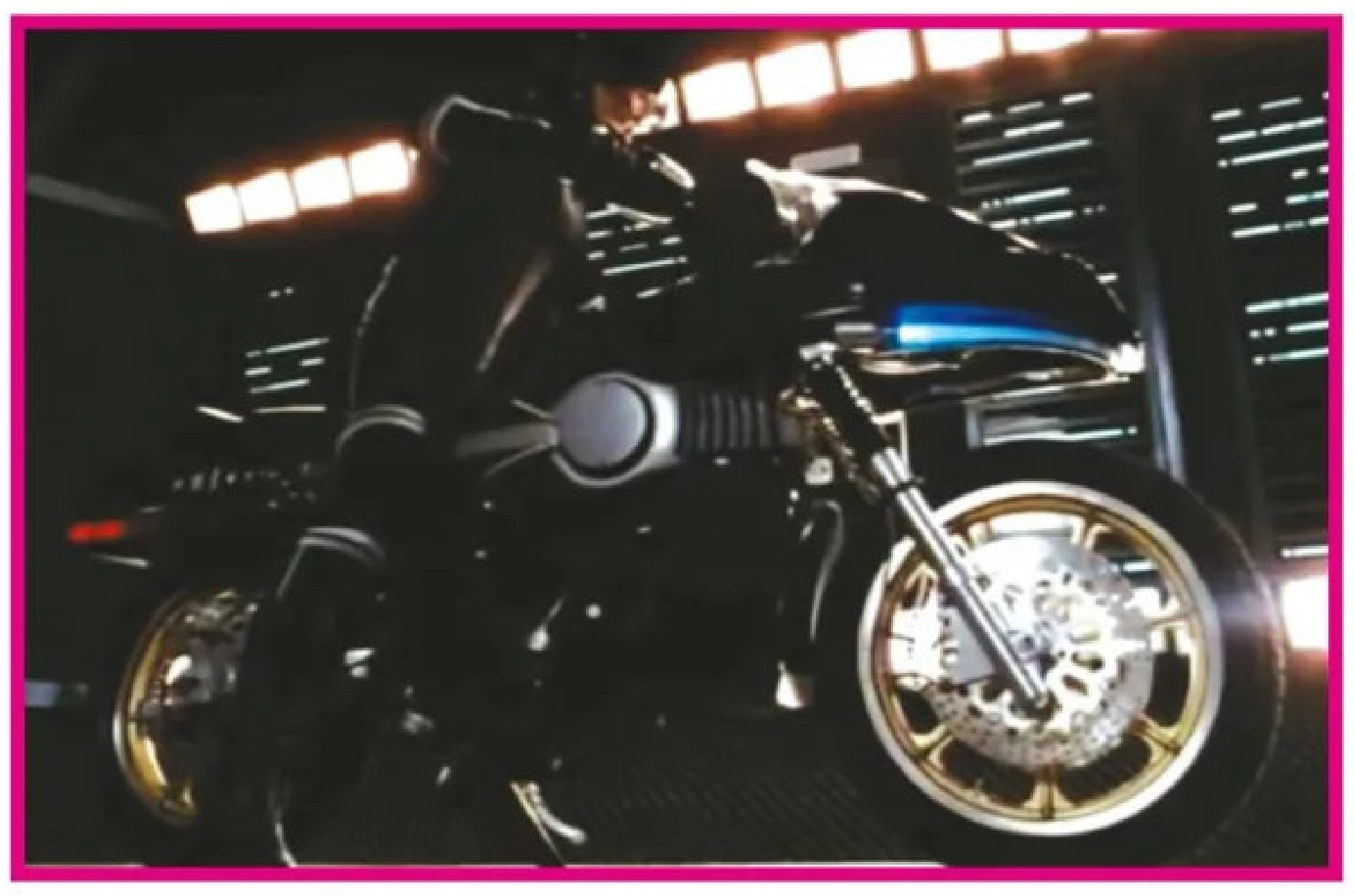
**38** Of all of *Spitting Image*'s puppet caricatures, the one that stood out the most was former prime minister Margaret Thatcher. The show became a weekly lancing of her politics, and she was made to appear ever more manic as the series progressed. But few escaped the creators' clutches, with the satire extending to culture, sport and entertainment.

> ***"Few escaped the creators' clutches, with the satire extending to culture, sport and entertainment"***

## Street Hawk

1985

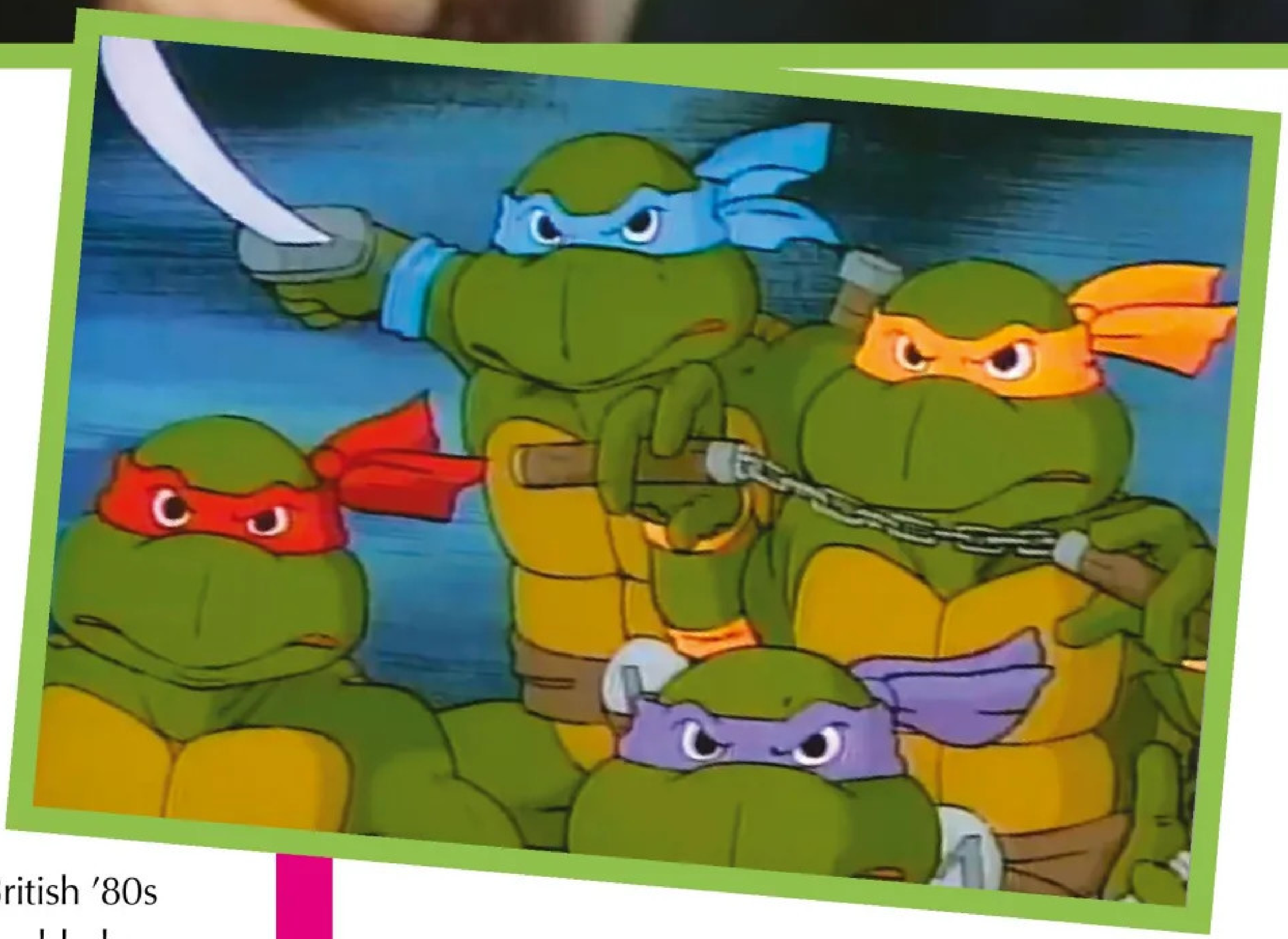
**39** With NBC riding high with its big-budget action series *Knight Rider*, ABC didn't want to be left in the cold. It created *Street Hawk* about a cop, Jessie Mach, testing a government project motorbike of the same name in an era when technology was the saviour and Cold War-inspired machinery was all the rage.



## Super Gran

1985-1987

**40** As Billy Connolly sang: "Stand back Superman, Iceman, Spider-Man, Batman and Robin too," because here was a typically British '80s comedy superhero in the guise of an elderly granny – played by Gudrun Ure who did many of her own stunts as she fought various villains.



## Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

1987-1996

**41** Whether you knew them as ninjas or heroes, the Turtles were typically hatched from an impending toy deal, in line with many '80s kids' shows. For many kids of the time, Leonardo, Raphael, Michaelangelo and Donatello were more famous as the teenaged anthropomorphic joke-crackers than the Italian Renaissance artists they were named after.

## Terrahawks

1983-1986

**42**

Following huge success with *Thunderbirds* and *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons* in the '60s, Gerry Anderson and Christopher Burr created another puppet-based show, *Terrahawks*. Lasting longer than the other two, it was packed with awesome characters, and included futuristic vehicles and tech, making it very much a sci-fi product of its era.

COMMUNICATIONS OVERRIDE

## The A-Team

1983-1987

**43**

Crashing into living rooms slap bang in the middle of the decade, Stephen J Cannell's decade-defining show brought cartoon-like violence to Saturday teatimes amid outlandish disguises, a distinctive van, shootouts in which no one died and lots of explosions. Mr T became the biggest star, his neck dripping in '80s bling.

## The Fall Guy

1981-1986

**44**

The trend towards realism in the '80s saw the number of injured film and TV stunt performers at its highest level thanks to car chases, helicopter scenes, fires, explosions, falls and blank ammunition. *The Fall Guy*, starring Lee Majors, was an action series about such performers and, as such, had its fair share of jaw-dropping stunts.

## The Golden Girls

1985-1992

**45**

Regularly attracting 25 million viewers, *The Golden Girls* had a standout cast of women, and put progressive values at its heart. Feminist in nature and laugh-out-loud hilarious, it showed there was a fun-packed life after marriage, and it was also admirably unafraid of tackling cultural stereotypes about the over-50s.

## Tickle on the Tum

1984-1988

**46**

Granada Television made many charming shows for the ITV network, among them *Alphabet Zoo, Children's Ward* and *Clapperboard. Tickle on the Tum*, presented by folk singer Ralph McTell, was another. Its feet-tapping songs lived long in the memory, and it attracted many guest presenters such as Penelope Keith and Bill Oddie.

## T.J. Hooker

1982-1986

**47**

*T.J. Hooker* is perhaps William Shatner's most ridiculed role. But veteran Sergeant Thomas Jefferson Hooker's no-nonsense demeanour, leather blouson jackets and scores of baddies to battle made for a popular, gritty show, underscored by a determination to avenge his partner's death, even if it meant not always going by the book.

## The Dukes of Hazzard

1979-1985

**48**

Back in the '80s, the Confederate flag could be painted across the top of a 1969 Dodge Charger and no one batted an eyelid. But that's because the eyes were on the action and the ears on the comedy. Cue cars flying through the air, old-fashioned fun, and Daisy Duke in her tiny shorts.

## The Paul Daniels Magic Show

1979-1994

**49**

Paul Daniels was a major star at a time when magic would command Saturday-night audiences of up to 17 million on BBC1. His chop cup trick on TV in 1985 remains a delight. He also made a TV camera disappear from a crate during transmission, and re-created Houdini stunts.

## Wacaday

1985-1992

**50**

After Roland Rat there was Timmy Mallet, the bespectacled presenter with a penchant for loud shirts. He brought his giant foam mallet along to this spin-off from the *Wide Awake Club* for some head-bashing fun, as part of the word-association game Mallet's Mallet.

# MY LITTLE PONY

## Information

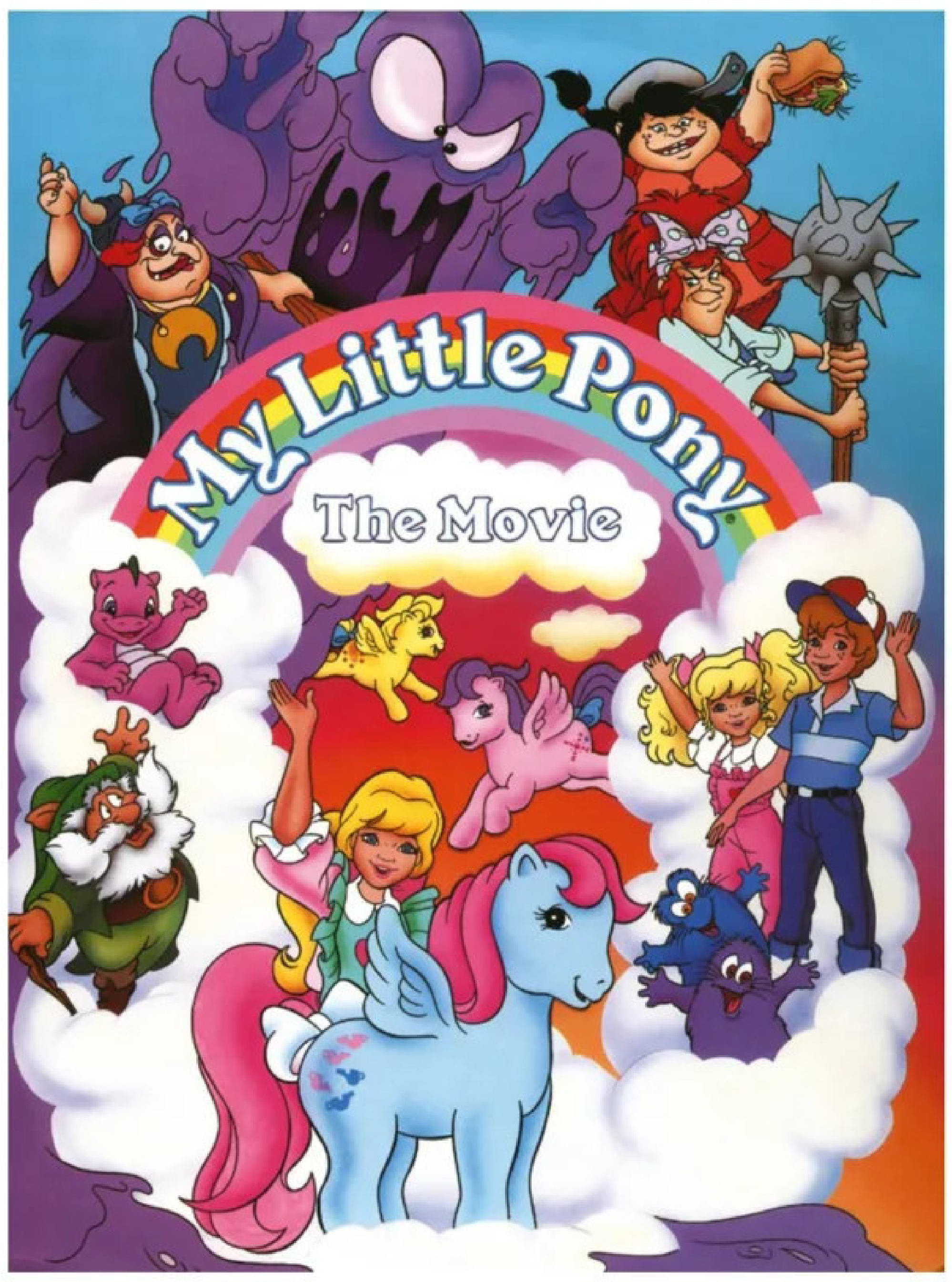
**Manufacturer:** Hasbro
**First released:** 1981
**Expect to pay:** £20
(Swan Boat Play Set)

It all started with a pony figurine in 1981. Hasbro's new toy wasn't much to look at. Called My Pretty Pony, it was 10 inches tall, and could swish its shaggy tail and wink one eye. Yet it was the start of a cultural revolution for girls toys, when the initial success of My Pretty Pony paved the way for a smaller, revised My Little Pony to follow a year later.

My Little Pony appealed directly to the fanatical collector that lies dormant in us all. The ponies were small, so they could form a tidy collection on any girl's shelves, but most of all they all stood out thanks to their glorious colours and bushy manes. Each pony had a unique symbol stamped on its hind leg, and Hasbro quickly latched onto the collector's appeal by launching different lines of My Little Pony figurines – So-Soft Ponies, Brush 'n' Grow Ponies, Twice-As-Fancy Ponies and more.

With My Little Pony well and truly embedded in every girl's life, it then galloped towards further domination in 1986 with an animated series (*My Little Pony*) and full-length film (*My Little Pony: The Movie*).

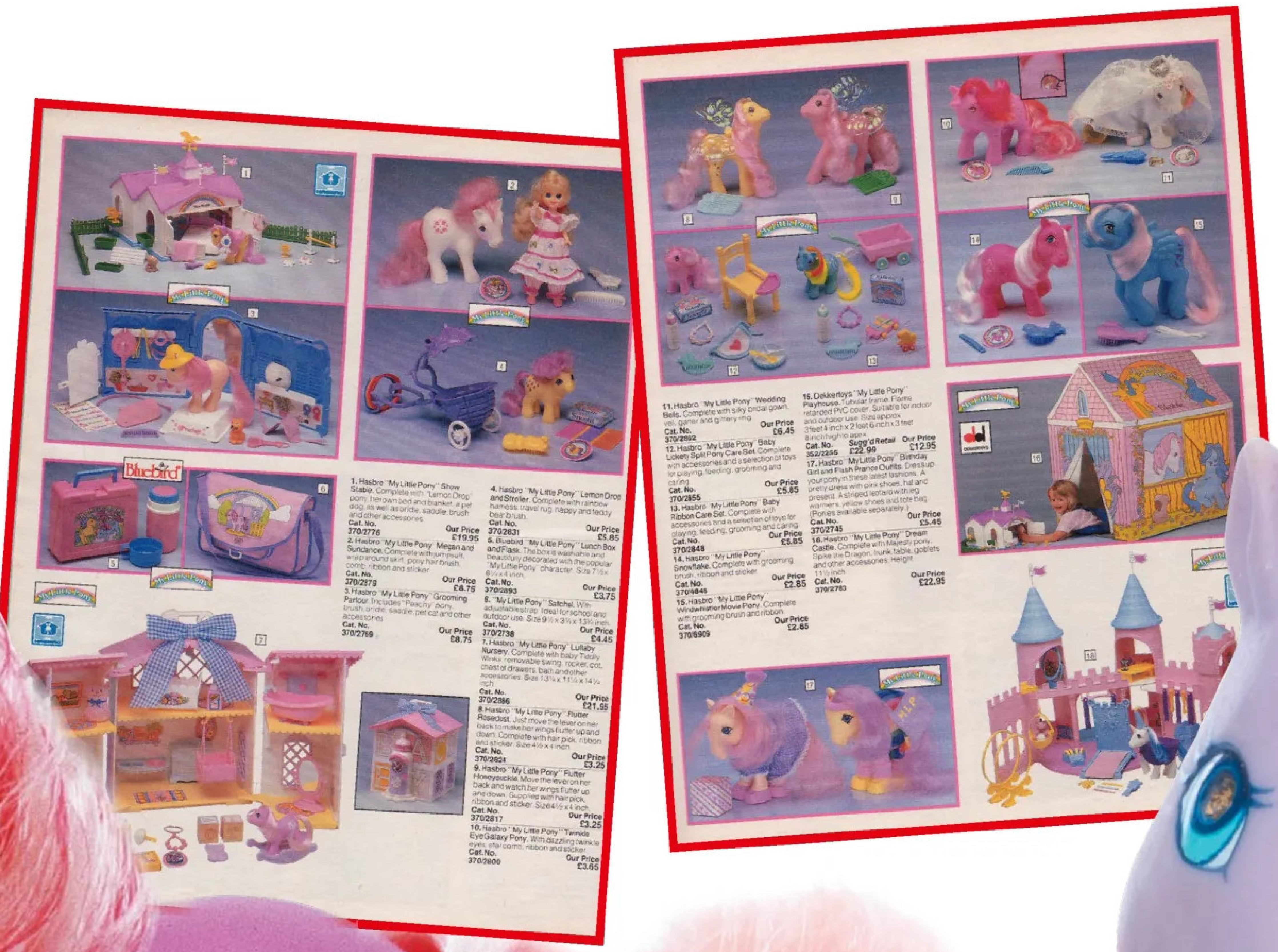
My Little Pony went from strength to strength, with more figurine lines, relaunches, and spreading out to comics, video games and conventions. But at the heart of it all are the My Little Pony figurines, which radiate as much warmth, personality and charm today as they did back when they first trotted onto toy-store shelves.



### THE LEGACY

Although the toys themselves are no longer as popular as they used to be, My Little Pony has lived on through TV series and films. More surprisingly, an adult fandom has proved so strong, it's led to several My Little Pony conventions being held around the world.

You could buy brushes, combs, and hair picks separately for My Little Pony. Looking after the glorious mane on My Little Pony was a big part of the toy's appeal, as children wanted to make sure their pony looked the best.



1. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Show Stable. Complete with "Lemon Drop" pony, her own bed and blanket, a pet dog, as well as bridle, saddle, brush and other accessories.
Cat. No. 370/2776 Our Price £19.95

2. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Megan and Sundance. Complete with jumpsuit, wrap around skirt, pony hair brush, comb, ribbon and sticker.
Cat. No. 370/2879 Our Price £8.75

3. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Grooming Parlour. Includes "Peachy" pony, brush, bridle, saddle, pet cat and other accessories.
Cat. No. 370/2769 Our Price £8.75

4. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Lemon Drop and Stroller. Complete with rainbow harness, travel rug, nappy and teddy bear brush.
Cat. No. 370/2831 Our Price £5.85

5. Bluebird "My Little Pony" Lunch Box and Flask. The box is washable and beautifully decorated with the popular "My Little Pony" character. Size 7½ x 8¼ x 4 inch.
Cat. No. 370/2893 Our Price £3.75

6. "My Little Pony" Satchel. With adjustable strap. Ideal for school and outdoor use. Size 9½ x 3¼ x 13¾ inch.
Cat. No. 370/2738 Our Price £4.45

7. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Lullaby Nursery. Complete with baby Tiddly Winks, removable swing, rocker, cot, chest of drawers, bath and other accessories. Size 13¼ x 11¼ x 14½ inch.
Cat. No. 370/2886 Our Price £21.95

8. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Flutter Rosedust. Just move the lever on her back to make her wings flutter up and down. Complete with hair pick, ribbon and sticker. Size 4½ x 4 inch.
Cat. No. 370/2824 Our Price £3.25

9. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Flutter Honeysuckle. Move the lever on her back and watch her wings flutter up and down. Supplied with hair pick, ribbon and sticker. Size 4½ x 4 inch.
Cat. No. 370/2817 Our Price £3.25

10. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Twinkle Eye Galaxy Pony. With dazzling twinkle eyes, star comb, ribbon and sticker.
Cat. No. 370/2800 Our Price £3.65

11. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Wedding Bells. Complete with silky bridal gown, veil, garter and glittery ring.
Cat. No. 370/2862 Our Price £6.45

12. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Baby Lickety Split Pony Care Set. Complete with accessories and a selection of toys for playing, feeding, grooming and caring.
Cat. No. 370/2855 Our Price £5.85

13. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Baby Ribbon Care Set. Complete with accessories and a selection of toys for playing, feeding, grooming and caring.
Cat. No. 370/2848 Our Price £5.85

14. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Snowflake. Complete with grooming brush, ribbon and sticker.
Cat. No. 370/4846 Our Price £2.85

15. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Windwhistler Movie Pony. Complete with grooming brush and ribbon.
Cat. No. 370/6909 Our Price £2.85

16. Dekkertoys "My Little Pony" Playhouse. Tubular frame. Flame retarded PVC cover. Suitable for indoor and outdoor use. Size approx 3 feet 4 inch x 2 feet 6 inch x 3 feet 8 inch high to apex.
Cat. No. 352/2255 Sugg'd Retail £22.99 Our Price £12.95

17. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Birthday Girl and Flash Prance Outfits. Dress up your pony in these latest fashions. A pretty dress with pink shoes, hat and present. A striped leotard with leg warmers, yellow shoes and tote bag. (Ponies available separately.)
Cat. No. 370/2745 Our Price £5.45

18. Hasbro "My Little Pony" Dream Castle. Complete with Majesty pony, Spike the Dragon, trunk, table, goblets and other accessories. Height 11½ inch.
Cat. No. 370/2783 Our Price £22.95

As the My Little Pony line continued to grow, fans began to learn the names of the more popular figures – Fluttershy, Honeycomb, Morning Glory, and so on. The cartoon helped make certain ponies even more popular.

The distinguishing mark for each pony could be found on its leg or its behind, and this is what made each pony stand out and become collectible.

One of the biggest changes that made My Little Pony a success is when the size dropped from 10 to 6 inches, as part of the rebrand from My Pretty Pony. That change helped make them even more collectible and their soaring popularity put an end to the My Pretty Pony line.

# FUNNYBONES BOOKS

Do you remember the stories about skeletons who lived in a dark, dark cellar down the dark, dark staircase of a dark, dark house on a dark, dark hill? *Funnybones* followed the adventures of a gang of skeletons – Big Funnybone, his brother Little Funnybone, and their pets Dog and Cat.

As the books were aimed at young readers, the storylines were simple. In one book, the skeletons would keep bumping into each other during the night and fall to pieces, so called upon Dr Bones to patch them up. In another, Dog has a dream about a big juicy bone. But it was the writing style that stood out as much as the bony characters of *Funnybones*. Word repetition meant the white, white Dog would disappear in white, white snow while gang took trips to places such as the dark, dark sea during dark, dark thunderstorms. The characters, the writing style and the art all combined to make for an unforgettable experience.

The books proved so popular that *Funnybones* went on to become an animated series, cementing its place in children's hearts. It brought the classic books to life and added a few new storylines too, such as the *Funnybones* finding a wishbone and deciding what to wish for. Welsh comedian Griff Rhys Jones provided the voices while the script kept the writing style intact. Whether in book form or as a cartoon, the humour shone brightly in this dark, dark tale…

Janet and Allan Ahlberg
FUNNYBONES

**It's testament to the enduring charm of *Funnybones* that Janet and Allan Ahlberg's books are as popular now as they ever were, and they remain in print at Penguin.**

### THE LEGACY

There isn't really a modern equivalent for *Funnybones*, but then there doesn't really have to be. Hugely successful, Allen and Janet Ahlberg's original book series is still being published today and since there were no cultural references in the books, the tales of the fun-loving skeletons haven't aged a day. The vibrant art and energetic adventures are still as captivating nowadays for a young audience that hasn't read them before as they were when the books were first published.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** William Heinemann Ltd
**First released:** 1980
**Current publisher:** Scholastic
**Expect to pay:** £6.99

After that the big skeleton
and the little skeleton
leave the dark dark –
Miaow! – pet shop, and
hurry down the dark dark street
to the dark dark house
. . . and the dark dark cellar.

They put the box on the table.
"I wonder what it is,"
says the little skeleton.
"Me, too," says the big skeleton.
. . . "WOOF!" barks the box.

Miaow!
Woof!
LITTLE MAMMOTH
FUNNYBONES Dinosaur Dreams
AHLBERG · AMSTUTZ
HEINEMANN

The television adaptation of *Funnybones* was short-lived, running for just 12 episodes in 1992, but was well received by young viewers at the time.

Little was frequently the instigator behind the *Funnybones*' adventures, with older brother Big always willing to help realise his younger sibling's ideas.

Prolific children's authors, the Ahlbergs collaborated on many successful titles. Allan's words were always beautifully complemented by the illustrations from late wife Janet.

# ULTIMATE '80s FASHION

Simultaneously the best and worst thing to ever happen to popular culture at that time

There's no doubt this decade was memorable for many things, but fashion was most definitely one of them. A fusion of music genres, influential films, emerging technology and a change in lifestyles meant an explosion of sartorial styles. It was eclectic, inventive, downright bizarre and most of all: fun. And the best thing? Whatever your age, style, taste and budget, there was a fashion trend you could get involved in.

While in the present day, many of us may feel the need to explain our hair and clothing choices to younger, more discerning fashion goers, there really is no need. You were living in the moment, guys. It was acceptable in the '80s. It was an age of 'bigger is better' and what better way of expressing that than with hair, clothes and accessories?

So, take a trip down memory lane and peruse 15 of our favourite trends from the '80s. Sadly, there wasn't room for jelly shoes, piano key neckties, Bermuda shorts, Dynasty dresses, slogan T-shirts and spandex, but know that they hold a special place in the hearts and minds of all true '80s fans.

## Power dressing and shoulder pads

1 Power dressing: what a way to make a living. This tailoring trend really did mean business for women in the '80s, and everyone looked slick as heck as a result. Whether you opted for trousers or a skirt with your jacket, one thing was essential: shoulder pads. The bigger the better!

## New Romantics

2 What do you get when you cross glam rock with punk and a pinch of makeup? New Romantics! This glamorous, gender-neutral movement partnered the glitz of heavily embellished military jackets with blouses, eyeliner and fabulously styled hair. It was championed by people such as Adam and the Ants, Boy George and Vivienne Westwood.

## Bum bag

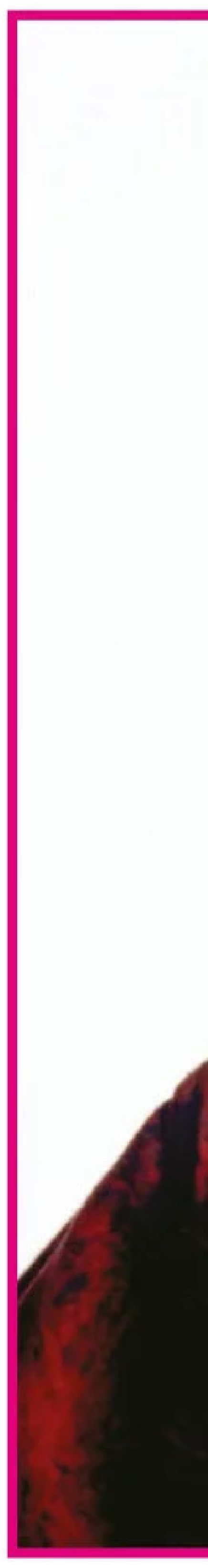
3 Also known as fanny packs, belly bags or banana bags, these hands-free belted satchels were the must-have leisure accessory for fashion fans. Legend has it the idea was developed from an old-fashioned medicine pouch. Fast-forward to the '80s and these beauties were available in a wide range of materials and colour combos, from leather to neon and everything in between.

## Big hair

**4** The ’80s was a celebration of hair and hair-related products. It was the ultimate medium for creative expression and completed your fashion look. Styles at the time included feather cuts, mullets, perms, Jheri curls, crimping, backcombing and more. Sales of industrial-sized hair lacquer and mousse have never been higher.

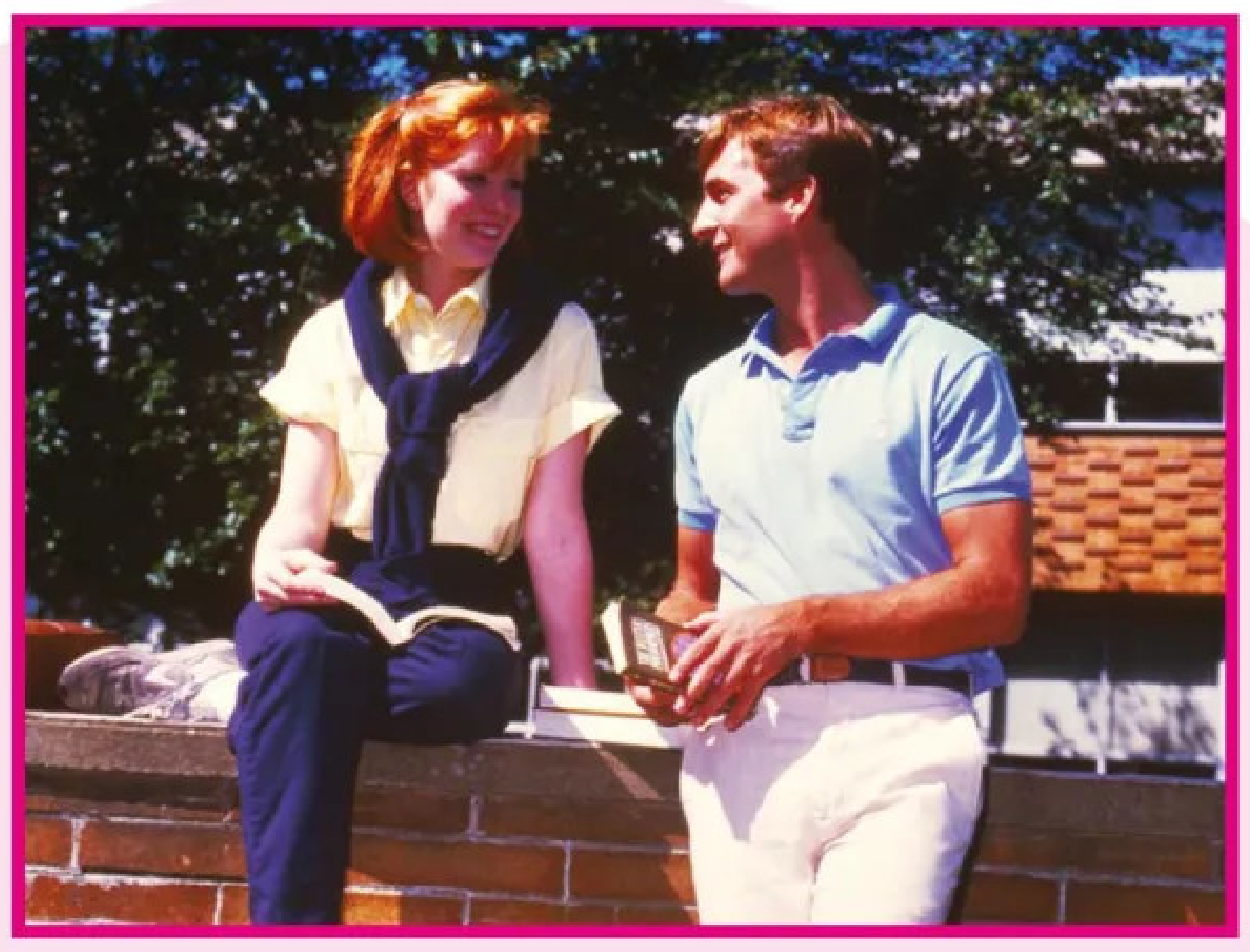
## Good sneakers

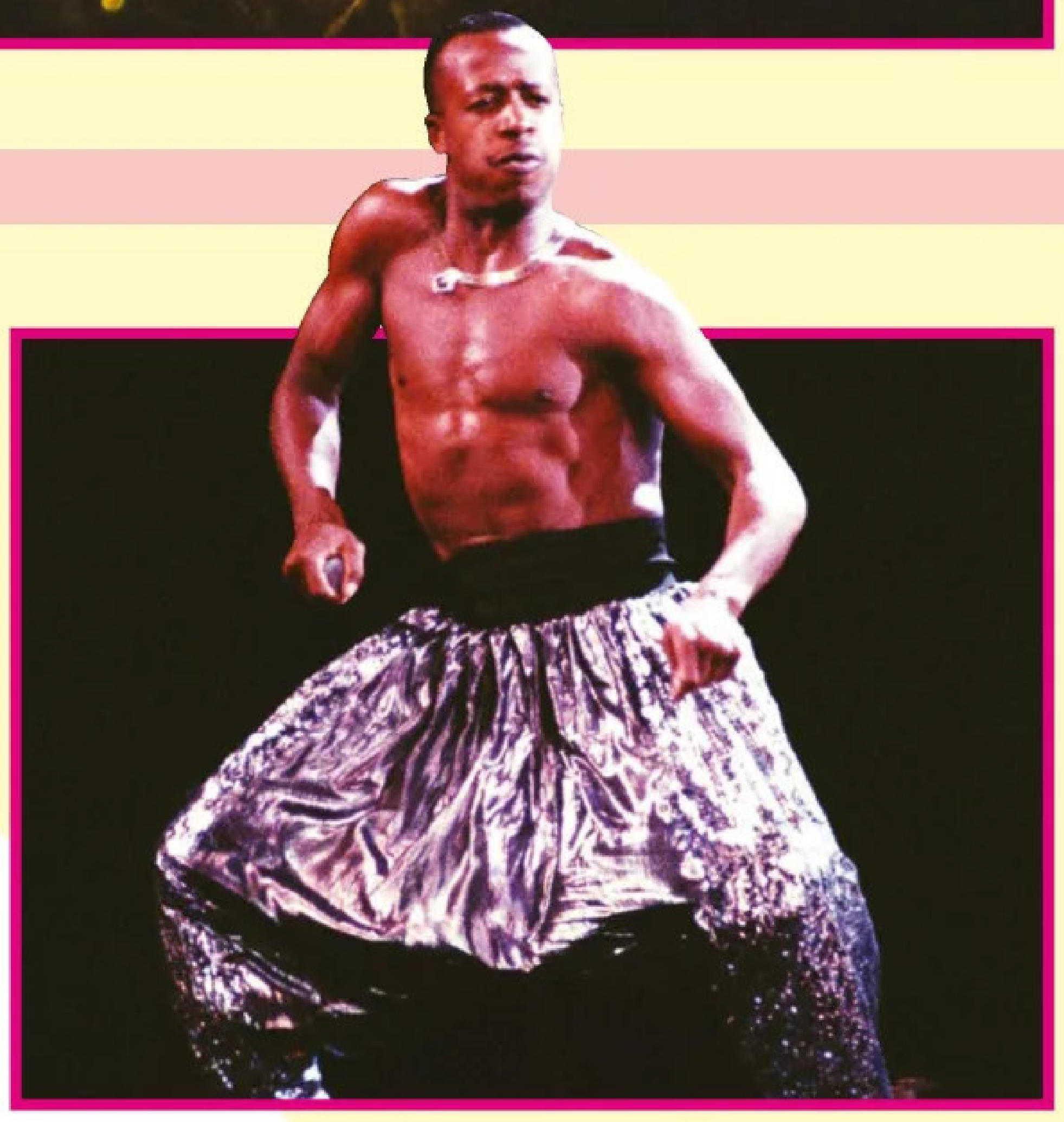
**5** Any trainer fans will agree that this decade was an exceptional one for well-designed kicks. We really were spoilt for choice. Run-DMC’s no-laces approach in the mid-’80s put Adidas Superstars in the hearts and minds of hip-hop fans. 1985 also saw the arrival of the first ever Air Jordans and, two years later, Nike’s Air Max 1 – the first to have *visible* air – hit stores.



## Preppy

**6** It seems weird referring to an upper-class trend as a sub-culture, but the preppy look was strong in the ’80s. It’s easy to re-create too. Just grab yourself a polo shirt, deck shoes (or, if you’re from the US, ‘Top-Siders’) and some chinos or tailored shorts. Now drape that colourful knitwear over your shoulders and you’re good to go!





## Hammer pants

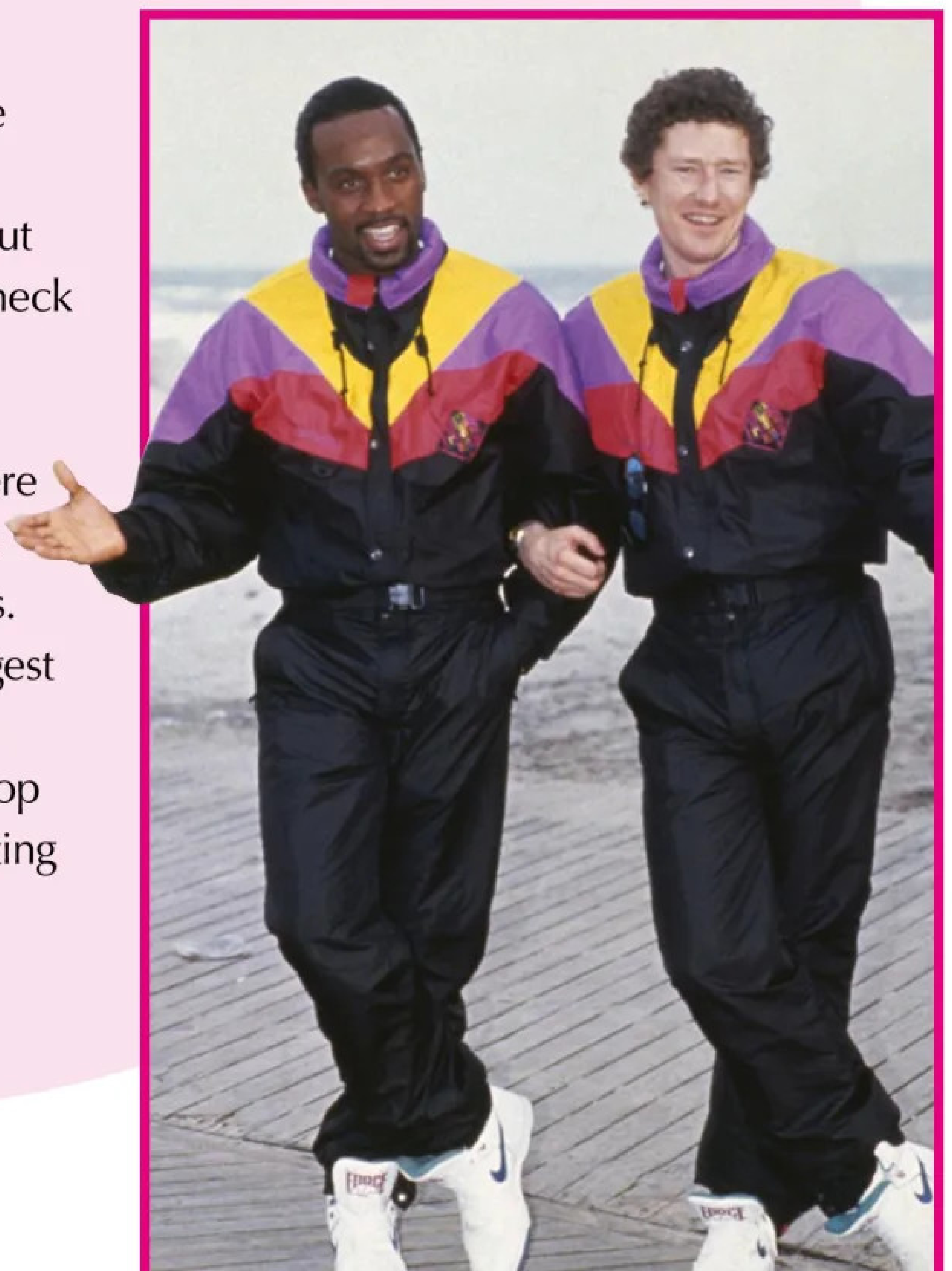
**7** Not to be confused with parachute pants (a more fitted garment usually made of nylon), the design of these dropped-crotch wonders were influenced by harem trousers. Popularised by the one and only MC Hammer, hammer pants were made from glitzy fabric and allowed for freedom of movement in dancing and general frolicking.

## Workout-wear

**8** With influences such as *Flashdance* and *Dirty Dancing*, as well as the popularity of Pineapple Studios and fitness queen Jane Fonda, it’s no surprise that workout-wear was so popular. Leggings, leotards, sweatbands, leg warmers… all complete with a side ponytail or swept-over fringe. Gorgeous.

## Shell suits

**9** Wearing one of these babies means you’re ready for anything, but you also get to rustle like heck while you do it. Available in a multitude of colours and designs, shell suits were a lightweight leisure outfit worn by people of all ages. Unconfirmed reports suggest that some dads in that era were known to team the top half with a pair of snug-fitting jeans. What an image.

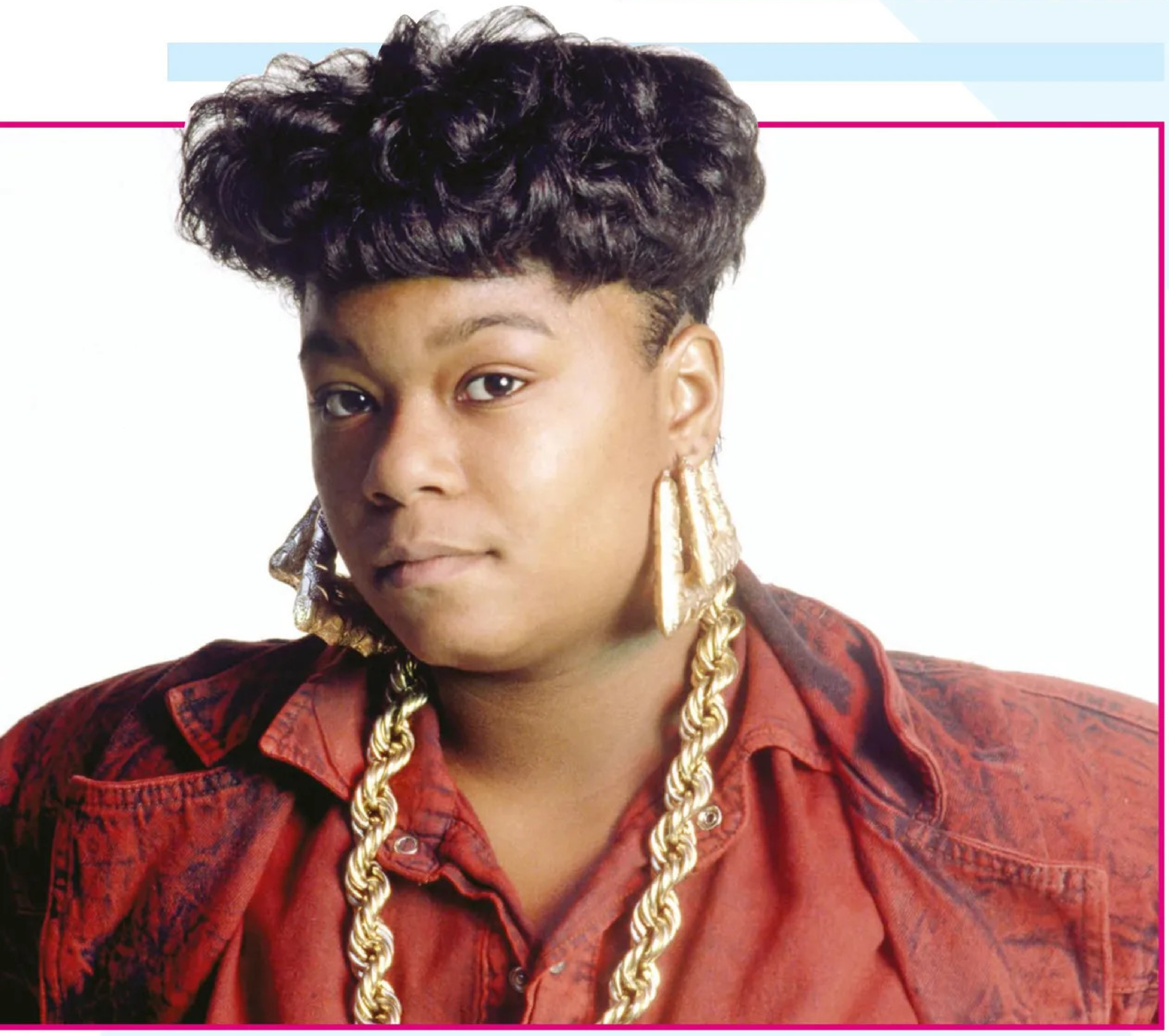


## Acid wash denim

**10** Jeans are a classic wardrobe staple, so it’s no wonder they too fell victim to the creative experiments of this decade. Acid wash jeans and, if you’re *really* lucky, a matching denim jacket (with tassels!) were a bold choice for any fan of ’80s fashion. Recent attempts at reviving the look have so far proved unsuccessful. A shame.

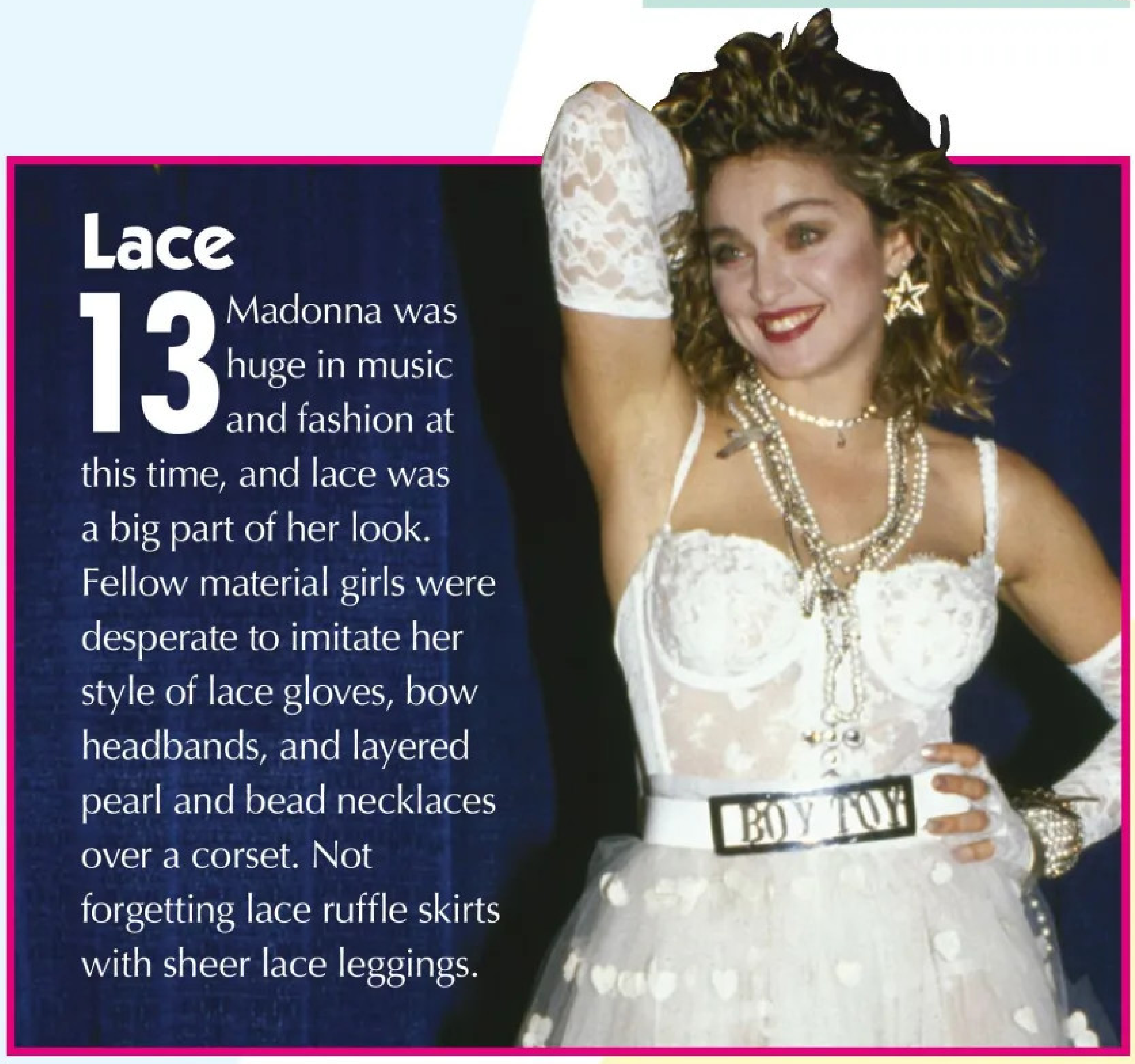
## Miami Vice

**11** Like many of the fashion trends in this era, the *Miami Vice* look (as you'd no doubt expect) was inspired by the hit TV show of the same name. Corporate-wear doesn't get better than this, in our opinion. It combines colour, style and comfort: what more could you want?



## Statement jewellery

**12** The term 'less is more' didn't really apply to outfits in the '80s. So what if you were already donning a shiny puffball dress with neon shoes and backcombed hair? You need to accessorise those garms. Garish dangly earrings, bangles stacked on each arm, chunky Mr-T-style necklaces… all layered up and worn at the same time.

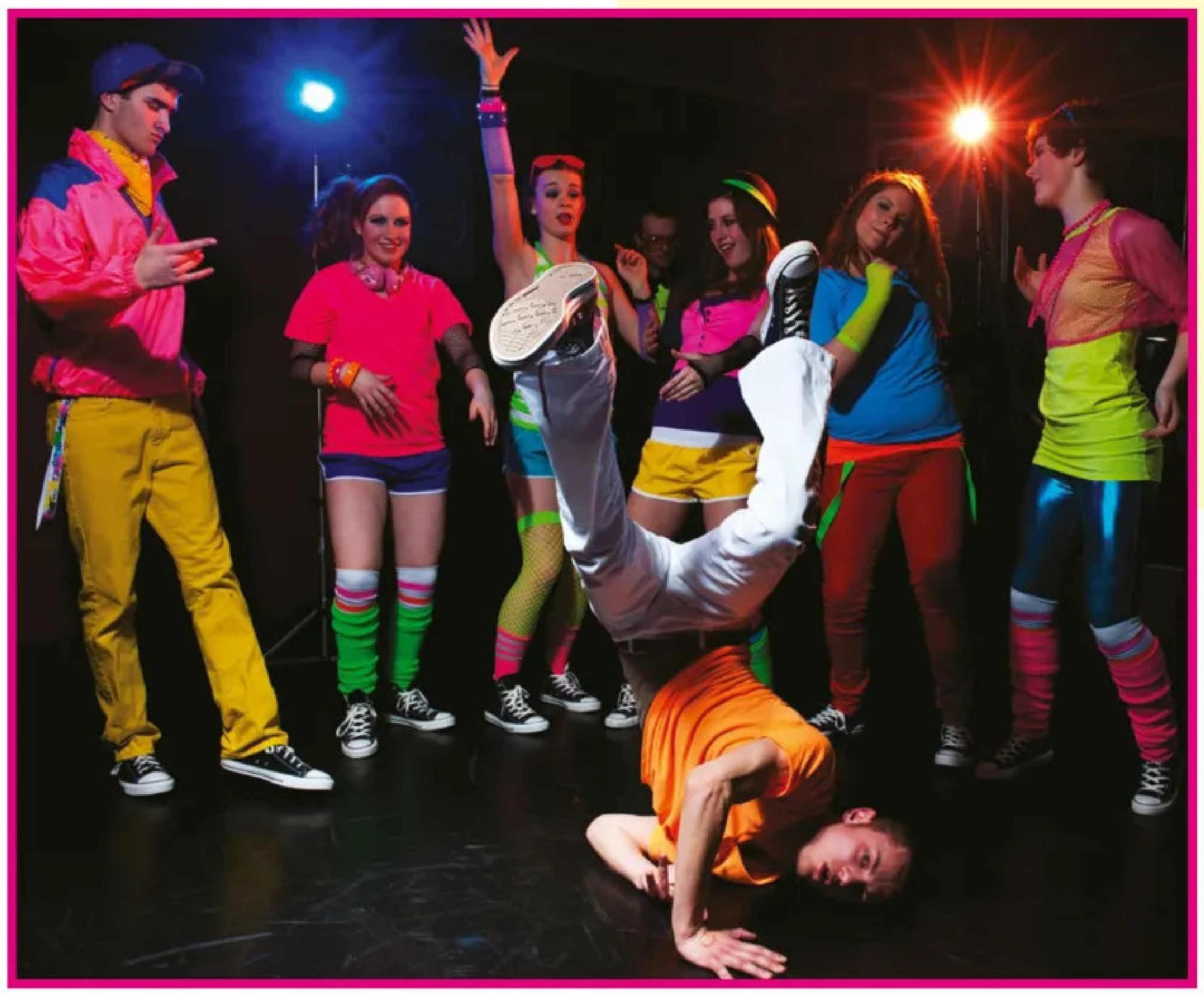


## Lace

**13** Madonna was huge in music and fashion at this time, and lace was a big part of her look. Fellow material girls were desperate to imitate her style of lace gloves, bow headbands, and layered pearl and bead necklaces over a corset. Not forgetting lace ruffle skirts with sheer lace leggings.

## Neon

**14** Neon pink, orange, green or yellow: bright, bold and look good on absolutely everything! This futuristic fluoro colour palette adorned underwear, outerwear and everything in between. Neon accessories were also everywhere: stacks of bracelets, massive earrings, sunglasses, hats, bags… it was the colour combo that kept on giving!



## Kangol hats

**15** Kangol hats, particularly the bucket hat style – officially known as the 'Bermuda casual' – were popularised by '80s hip-hop stars such as LL Cool J, Run-DMC and Slick Rick. Fans of the headwear can even find one of Grandmaster Flash's 504 Kangols, the backwards-style cap, in the Smithsonian museum!

# THE RACCOONS

## Information

**Manufacturer:**
Gillis-Wiseman Productions
**First released:** 1985
**Expect to pay:** £19.99
(Season 1, DVD)

Autobots vs Decepticons. He-Man vs Skeletor. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles vs Shredder. Cartoons in the '80s featured their fair share of good versus evil, but none was quite as fun as *The Raccoons*, which pitched Bert Raccoon and his friends against the villainous, cigar-chomping Cyril Sneer.

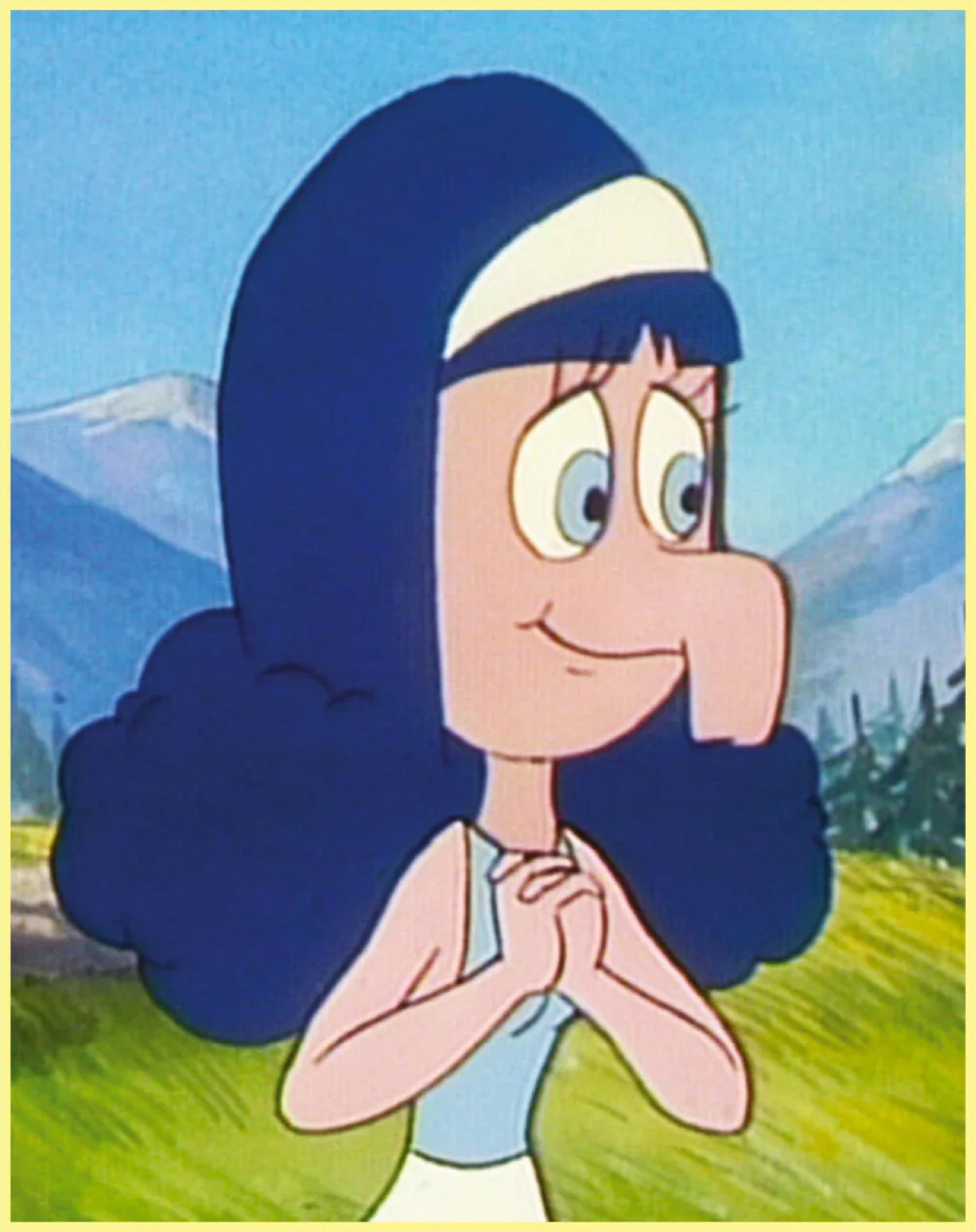
*The Raccoons* centred around the battle for Evergreen Forest, home of the Raccoons but also a target for Cyril Sneer, the lumber baron who sees it as an opportunity to make a quick buck. His schemes are vast and many, as Sneer tries to destroy the forest for various reasons ranging from wanting to build a new car factory to something as throwaway as the noises of the forest's animals keeping him up at night. It takes Bert's ingenuity, determination and friends in the Evergreen Forest to stop him. Unusually, *The Raccoons* started life as a series of TV specials.

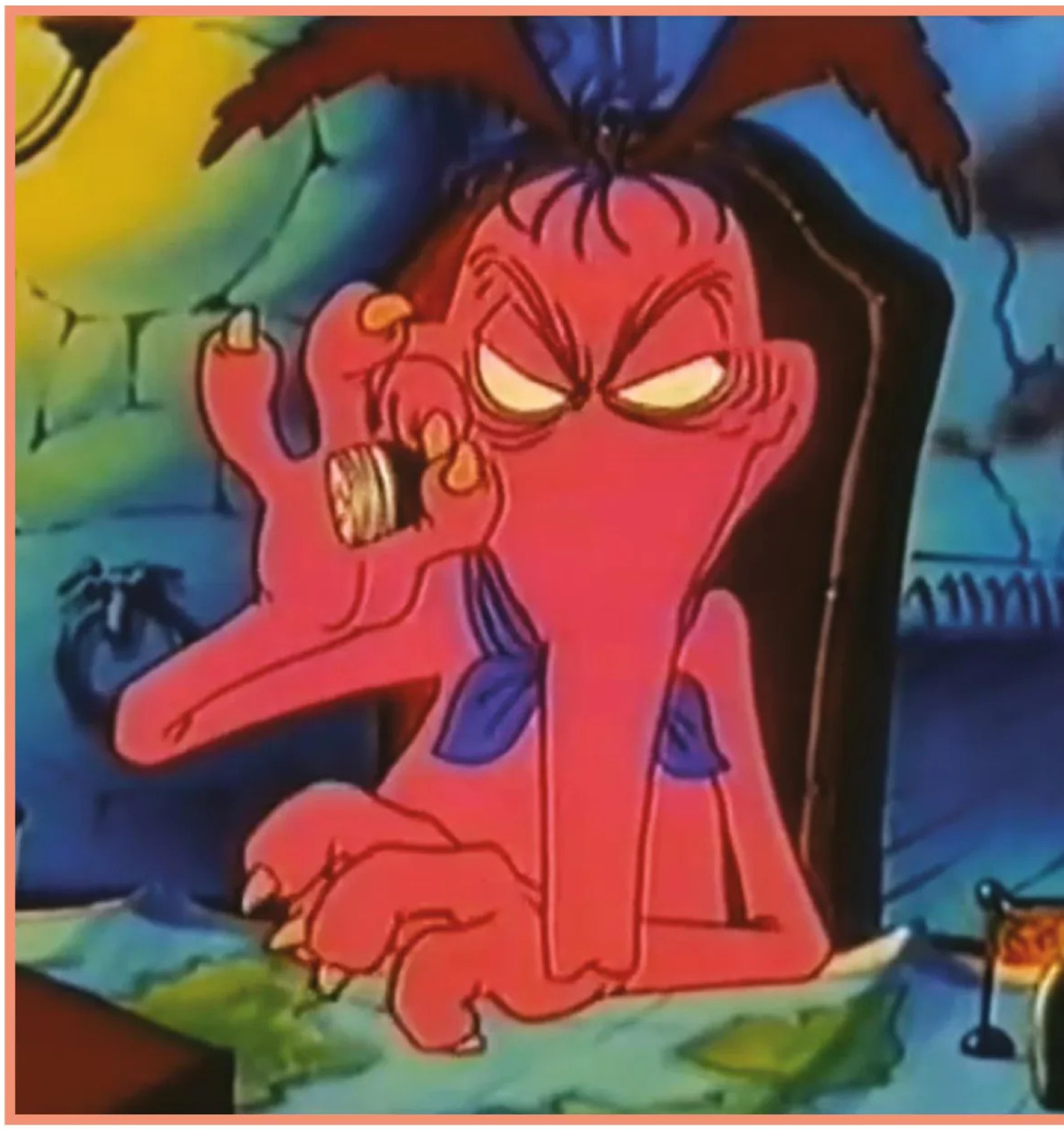
*The Christmas Raccoons* was supposed to be a one-off, but it was such a big success that it was followed by three more: *The Raccoons On Ice*, *The Raccoons and the Lost Star*, and *The Raccoons: Let's Dance!* Eventually, that led to the cartoon itself getting the green light and its focus on environmentalism tapped into one of the major concerns of the '80s: that we were destroying our planet with our modern way of living.

But the lasting memory of *The Raccoons* for almost everyone who watched it is likely its catchy ending theme, 'Run With Us'. Written especially for *The Raccoons*, it was sung by cast member Lisa Lougheed, who voiced Lisa Raccoon.

It was a new-wave pop song that sounded like pop chart material rather than the closing theme to a children's cartoon. It even ended up making the music charts in Canada.

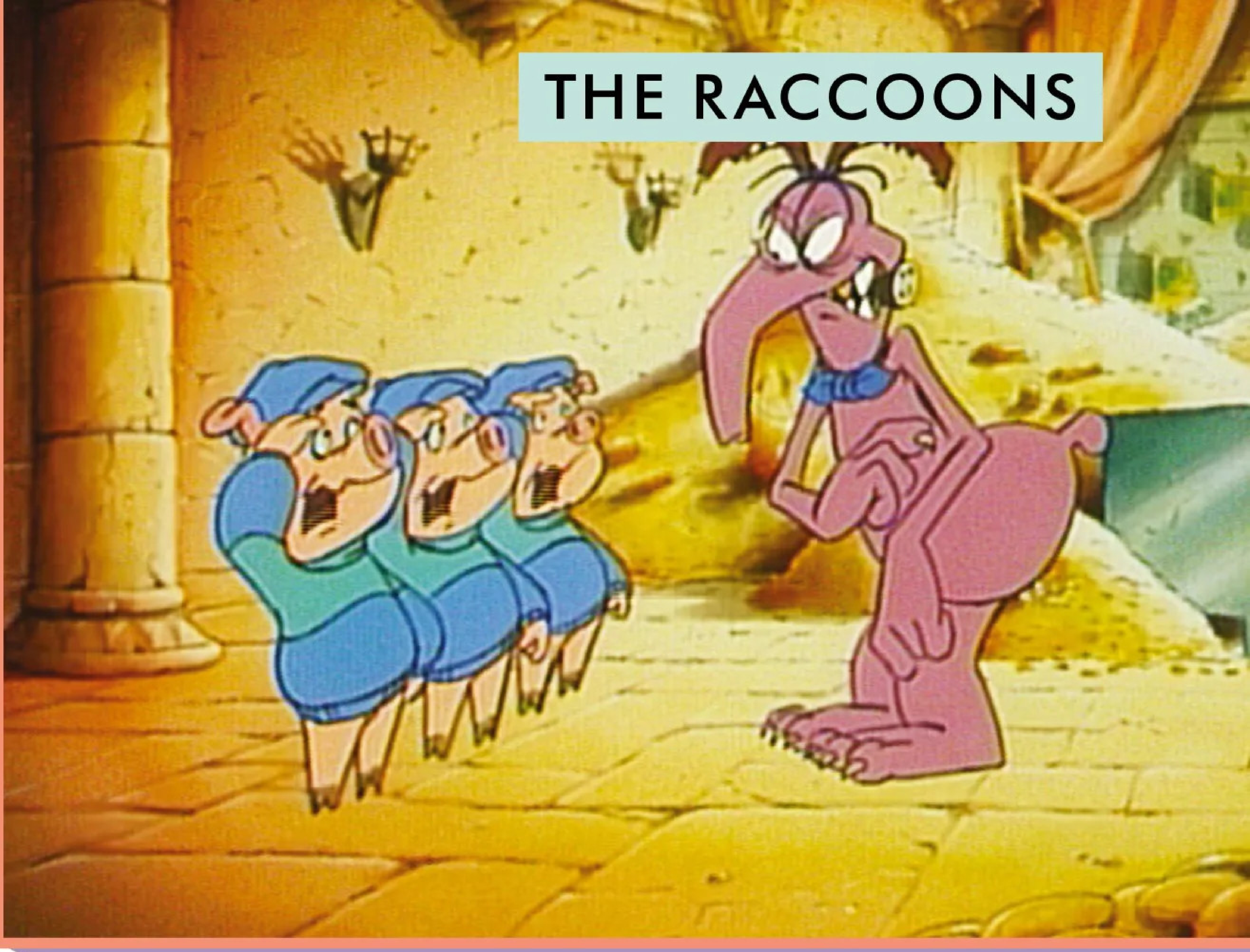
*The Raccoons,* in particular the early episodes, centred around the fight for Evergreen Forest. The location itself was inspired by Lake Clear in Ontario, where creator Kevin Gillis grew up.





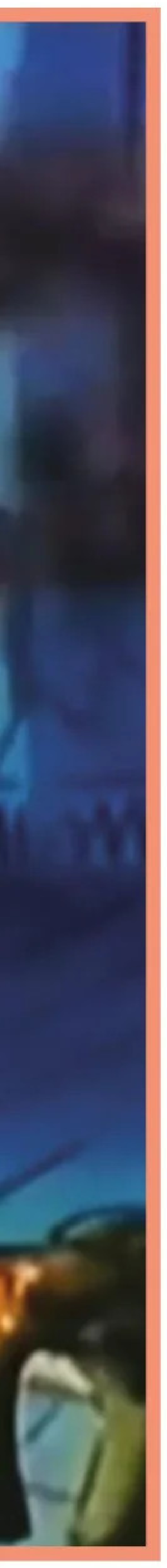
Bert spends the early episodes in *The Raccoons* stopping Cyril Sneer's evil plans but as the series progresses, Cyril Sneer eventually becomes something of a sympathetic anti-hero. It added a nice moral touch of grey to a kids cartoon, proving they can be more complex than straightforward goodies versus baddies.

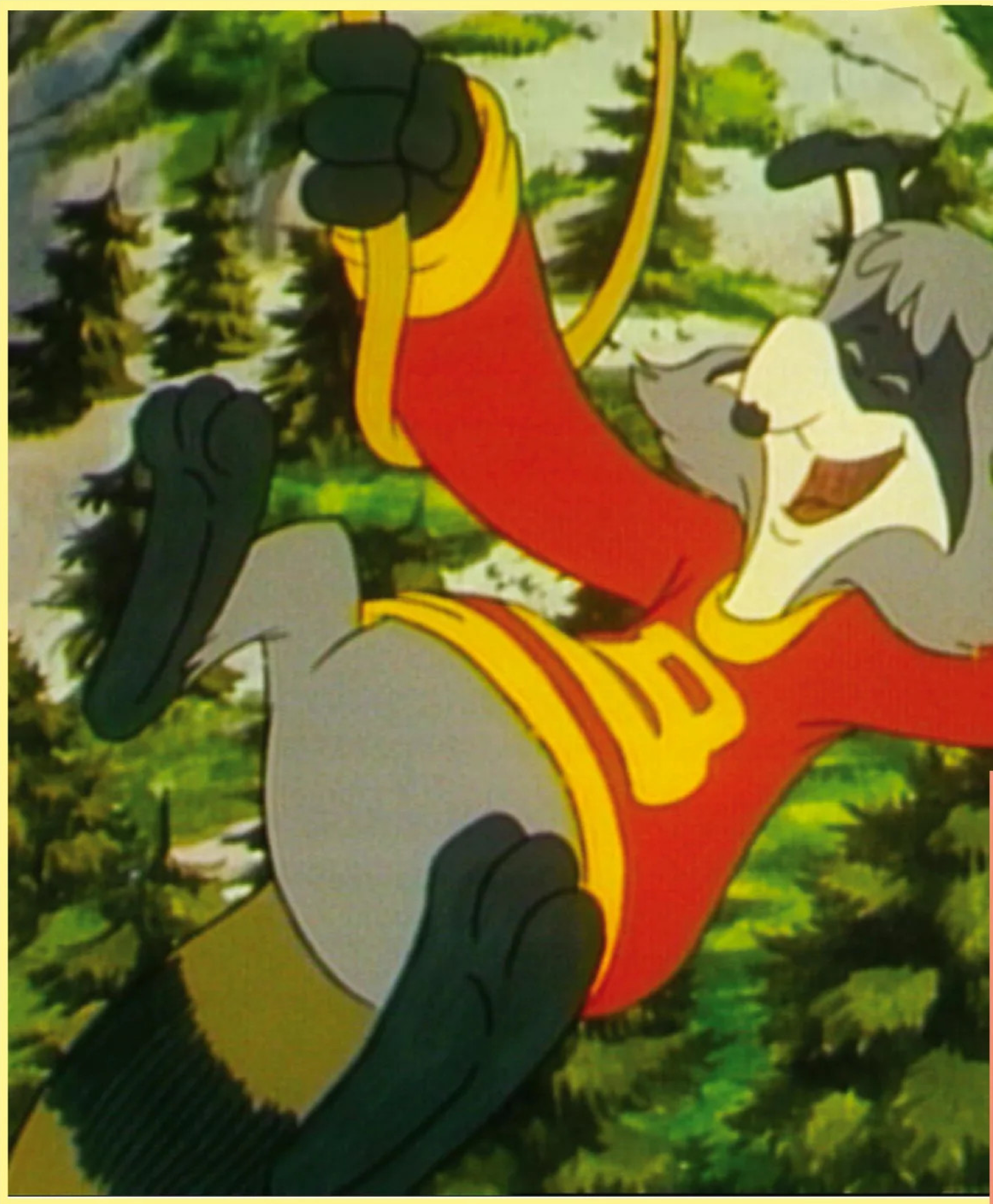
In case you were wondering, Cyril Sneer was an Aardvark. Throughout the series he was voiced by Canadian actor Michael Magee, who also played Cyril's dog, Snag.



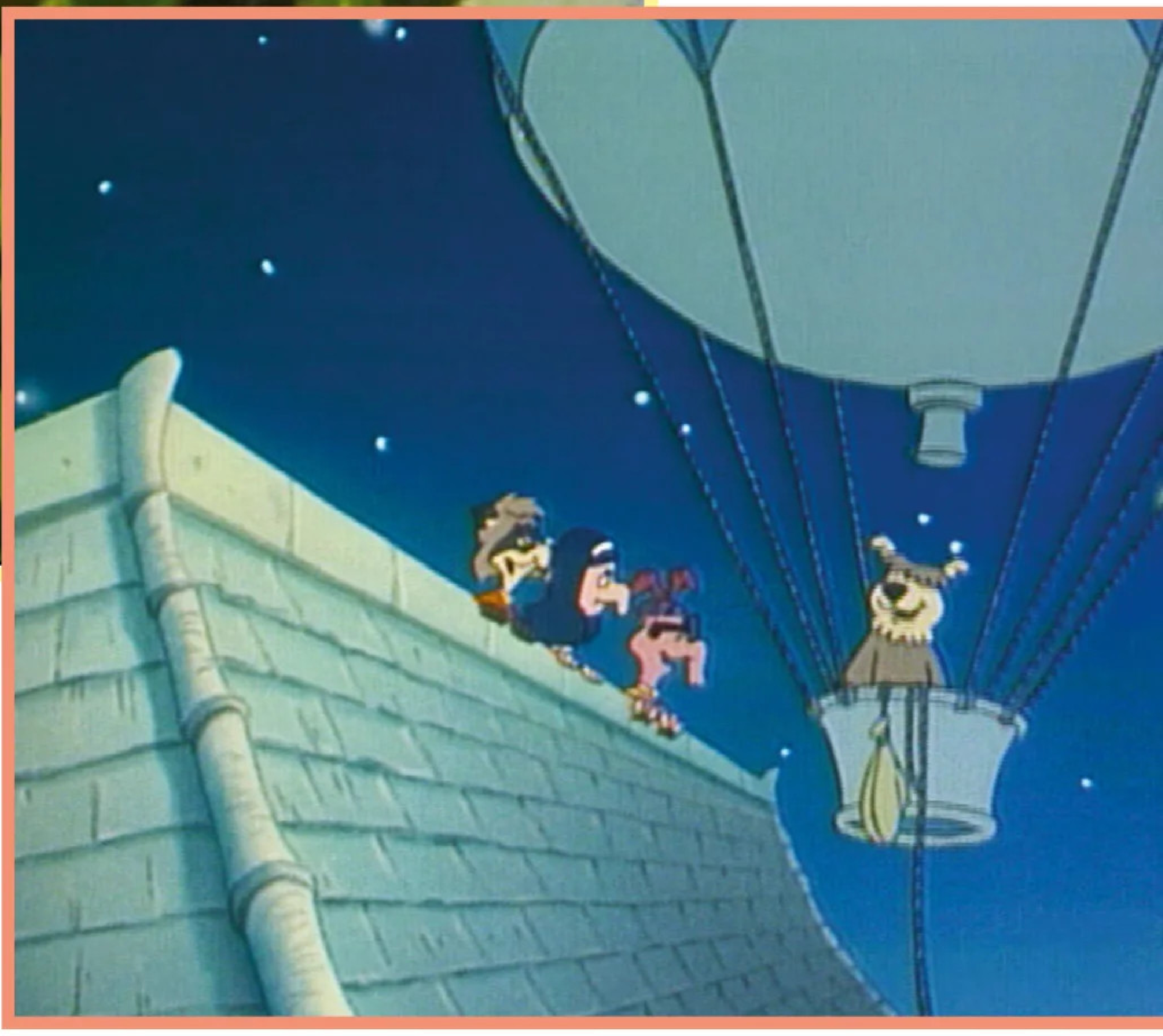
## THE LEGACY

*The Raccoons* paved the way for animated films about environmentalism which followed soon after, particularly *Once Upon A Forest and FernGully*: The Last Rainforest. Although nothing has really taken its place in terms of preaching an environmentally friendly message to younger audiences, *The Raccoons* definitely signifies a time in the '80s when looking after the planet and saving the forests was one of the big concerns in everyday life.





The main protagonist of the show, Bert is the star of every episode and special of *The Raccoons*. He lives with his friend Ralph, having moved from Metropolis, and they get on each other's nerves in the way most best friends do – Bert annoys Ralph by adding peanut butter to gourmet food, while Ralph annoys Bert with his terrible puns.



*The Raccoons* ran for five seasons, starting in 1985 and drawing to a close in 1991. The extended finale saw Cyril Sneer retire and his son Cedric, best friends with Bert Raccoon, take over the business.

TETRIS
DISTRIBUTED BY BANDAI
BAN DAI
MADE IN JAPAN
THEY'RE HERE
TO SAVE THE WORLD
GHOSTBUSTERS
THE SUPERNATURAL SPECTACULAR
SUPER MARIO BROS. 3
EXCITEBIKE
DOUBLE DRAGON

**Information**

**Year released:** Japan, July 1985, UK: Late 1987
**Original price:** Japan: 54800 Yen, US: $199.99, UK: £149.99
**Expect to pay:** £20+

# NES

## What's noticeable about any retelling of the Nintendo Entertainment System saga is its recognised status as saviour of the videogame industry. While this is certainly true on a global scale, here in the UK the NES had to fight to earn its reputation…

Regardless of wildly erratic release dates, mastermind launch tactics, outstanding tech-specs and bewildering global sales figures, one aspect is paramount over all others: to talk about the NES is to talk about the return of the videogame industry from the brink of destruction.

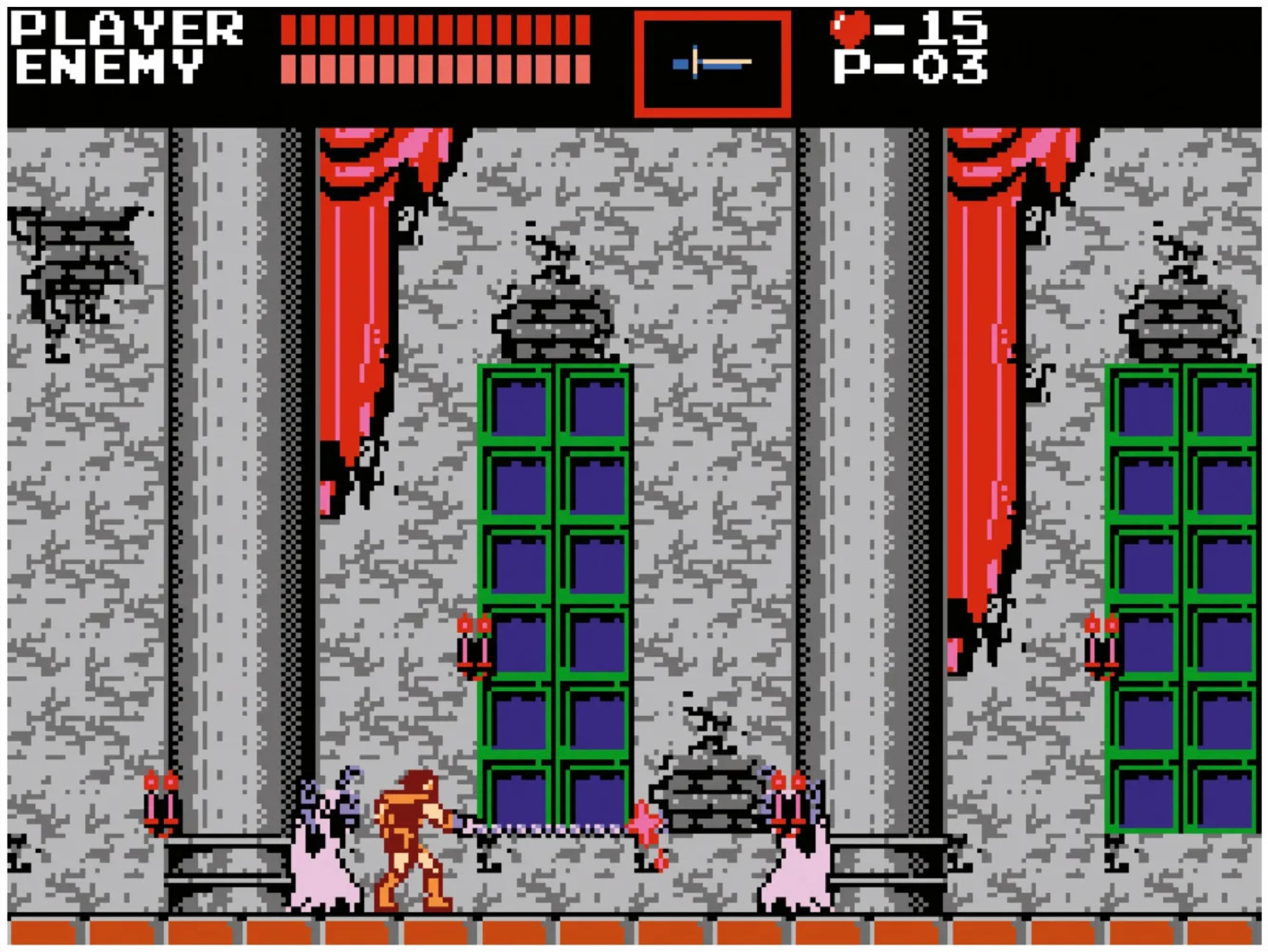
But the industry has always been very much compartmentalised, and trends have never travelled well across the oceans. While America – the feeding ground of the avaricious developer – turned its back on videogames in the early '80s, the Japanese continued with their normal game-playing lives quite happily, prompting relative newcomer, Nintendo, to bring its flourishing coin-op into homes.

This was a more significant change for Nintendo than most gamers ever realised. Up until 1983, Nintendo would've been better described as an electronic toy manufacturer – not a software or game developer. Product ranges from lightgun clay pigeon shooting to electronic love testers were far more synonymous with the name Nintendo than any living room-based entertainment.

It was only natural for Nintendo to experiment with the *Pong* craze sweeping through the '70s, and a decent addition to the list was made in conjunction with Mitsubishi in the shape of the TV Game 6 and its unimaginatively named successor, the TV Game 15. Although a worthwhile introduction, the two systems did nothing to persuade Nintendo that home videogames were the future, and efforts shifted toward the arcades. Viewing from afar the self-destructive market saturation America was suffering from with home consoles in the late '70s, Nintendo was resolute that pay-per-play was the only way money could be gleamed from videogames.

Rather astutely, however, it deviated from standard product ranges in 1980 as industry legend Gunpei Yokoi developed the immortal and extraordinarily successful Game & Watch series of handheld LCD units with the help of his friend and colleague, Masayuki Uemura (whom Yokoi had poached from electronics giant Sharp). At the same time, fellow game design prodigy Shigeru Miyamoto was putting the finishing

"This new machine established Nintendo as a world gaming power overnight"



The humble NES *Castlevania,* which led to the brilliant *Castlevania IV*. Then the magnificent *Symphony Of The Night*. Then there was *Castlevania 64* which was… actually, scratch that last one. It was rubbish.

touches on Nintendo's eminent arcade smash, *Donkey Kong*.

This new arcade machine finally broke through the cultural barrier between the East and West, establishing Nintendo as a world gaming power overnight. Realising this was hot property, Uemera was given the previously uninspiring task of getting Nintendo home gaming units firmly encamped beneath the TVs of Japan. His brief was at once simple and impossibly demanding: this new Nintendo system must be cheaper and higher quality than the closest competition.

His concept was equally simple in application, yet intricate in construct. A major factor in Uemera's answer to this difficult question was his unexpected use of the revolutionary MOS 6502 CPU. An equivalent of the popular Motorola 68000, Nintendo's choice of processor was surprising not because of the capability of the chip, but simply because of its age. The MOS 6502 was designed in 1975 and had already seen considerable use in the videogame industry, primarily in a cut-down version for the Atari 2600 and at the core of both the Apple I and II computers.

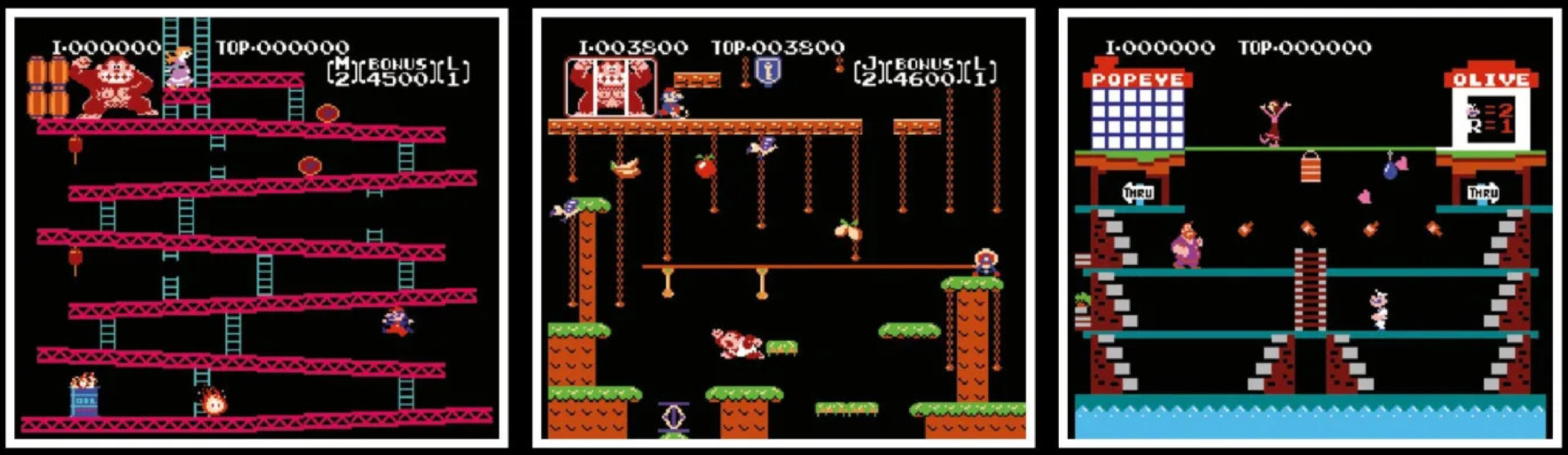
By the time Nintendo was drawing up designs for the Home Video Computer (as its first ROM cartridge system prototype was named), the MOS chip was a veritable home computing bargain, weighing in at less than $30 compared to the 68000's $179 price tag. When modified by long-lived Japanese electronics giant, Ricoh (who removed the binary decimal mode to make room for 22 extra memory registers for joypad input, sound generation, sprite based memory access and more), a deluge of game-specific blood was squeezed from the revamped 'system-on-a-chip' stone.

The final few months of development in 1983 brought all the different factions of Nintendo together. If there was a strength within the company, it was scrutinised, redeveloped and integrated into the renamed Nintendo Family Computer, or Famicom as it quickly became known. The revolutionary control system of Yokoi's Game & Watch handhelds was built into the joypads (what we now rather sanitarily refer to as the D-pad), Miyamoto's *Donkey Kong* arcade stomper was beautifully converted for the launch, strict quality controls were built into future licensing deals and a plethora of peripherals were primed to take the bare bones base unit into the next-generation of home entertainment.

On July 15th 1983, Japanese stores rang to the sound of Nintendo based sales. But the launch was not without its problems. A glitch between an erratic chipset and their attachment to the motherboard caused consistent reliability issues, and president of Nintendo, Hiroshi Yamauchi made a bold decision to recall the entire first batch of Famicoms. The corporate danger of acknowledging an immediate design issue with the new console was, he stated, secondary to maintaining Nintendo's good name in the long term. Apparently the game-playing public agreed, and bearing no grudge against the console's troubled birth, the second release of the Famicom (featuring round controller buttons replacing the previously square ones) was met with unprecedented success.

If there was any doubt as to whether the NES retained its place in the hearts and minds of Nintendo fans around the world, the launch of a special NES Mini in 2016 put them to rest. The plug-in console sold out almost instantly, and remains extremely difficult to track down.

Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM™
NES VERSION
1
2
Nintendo®
SELECT START
B
A



In Japan the system didn't launch with Super Mario Bros., instead they received the below three titles. All were conversions of arcade games, and all three have connections to Miyamoto.

Over 500,000 units sold within the first two months of the second Japanese release, and the Famicom was subsequently distributed throughout East Asia. Retailing at ¥14,800, Nintendo managed to shift over 19 million units within its native shore alone during the impressively long lifespan of its beloved console. But over in America, the market had disappeared into a black hole of avarice, and although practically all the potential competition had gone with it, so had the customers.

Much of the feeling around Nintendo was that the cultural divide was simply too great to bridge, and attention was better spent on local retailing. But just as he'd done with the coin-op business, Yamauchi was adamant that Nintendo was going Stateside with its games and hardware. Initial licensing and distribution talks with failing Atari quickly fell through, so the task once again fell to the beleaguered, yet proven capable, Nintendo of America.

Fresh from its successful manufacture, launch and distribution of the *Donkey Kong* coin-op, NoA attempted to reignite the American gamer's consciousness with a somewhat pitiable demonstration of the Nintendo 'Advanced Video System' at the 1984 CES show. Many toy distributors openly laughed at the attempt to sell a games console, while others rushed past in embarrassment or cast vitriolic, vengeful gazes at the videogame hardware that had almost ruined them the year before. It was a categorical disaster.

A stoutly traditional Japanese man, Yamauchi steadfastly refused to accept the American rejection of his console. So, for the 1985 CES show, the infinitely resourceful NoA team cleverly redesigned the machine into the Nintendo Entertainment System (renamed to remove any videogame connotations), deliberately creating a featureless, grey brick that in no way resembled a console, adding nuances such as a front loading cartridge slot, intended to make the system blend in with VCRs.

We
HP 35
Love
HP 30
The
HP 33
Wii
HP 30
IMP
FIGHT
MAGIC
DRINK
ITEM
RUN

*Final Fantasy*, ironically titled because Square only had enough money to publish one final game. Luckily it was a huge success.

Packaged with a couple of fairly superfluous peripherals; a lightgun called the Zapper and R.O.B. the Robot (a marginally interactive remote controlled toy intended to work together with the games), the actual NES base unit was adequately camouflaged. This backdoor approach helped the system slip under the radar of many toy distributors, and as the Christmas season approached, the second phase of the American plan came into play.

At considerable peril to their already tenuous branch of the Nintendo Empire, NoA offered New York shop owners a risk free option for stocking the NES console over the commercial sales period. Nintendo itself would set up the store displays and grant owners a sale or return policy. If the console bombed over Christmas '85, the only ones to lose out would be Nintendo.

The gambit, while not tremendously successful, provided one saving grace for the nervous salesmen at NoA. Consoles didn't fly off the shelves as hoped (moving around 50,000 units), but the steady and hopeful sales reassured shop owners that videogames were once again a viable commodity, and very few actually took Nintendo up on its return offer.

Miyamoto hadn't been sat idle during the US crisis, either, and during 1985 he worked tirelessly to shoehorn his second arcade smash hit, *Super Mario Bros.* into a Famicom cartridge. As always, he was successful, and Nintendo saw its opportunity to invade the US once and for all. By October, a Western version was ready to be bundled with the NES – a tactic designed to coincide with NoA's move to go national with its in-house distribution network.

Piracy was soon rife in Japan, with cloned Famicom cartridges and cheap knockoff hardware flooding in from all across Asia. The Famicom contained no form of software security other than a strict licensing agreement which bound third-party developers to Nintendo's command. When the Famicom was redesigned for the world markets, several measures were taken to pre-empt piracy or unlicensed development.

Some measures were simple and a direct quick-fix to the local troubles. World cartridges were a different shape and pin out, physically prohibiting the use of Japanese games in non-Asian consoles. A secondary, and far more complex system, was also installed in the NES machines, known as the 10NES regional lockout chip. This chip required security codes (which needed a specific and critical timing system to be applied during the code transfer) to be present on the cartridges, and the only way for developers to get these codes was to ensure their game was licensed by Nintendo.

Over the years Nintendo has been often criticised for its extremely militant approach to licensing and security, and many of those

> **"Shoehorning Super Mario Bros. into a Famicom cartridge was unswervingly successful – Nintendo saw its chance to invade the US once and for all"**

> ***"Although E.T. may have pushed gamers over the edge, it was merely the icing on a particularly unpalatable cake – Nintendo was adamant the same would never happen to its console"***

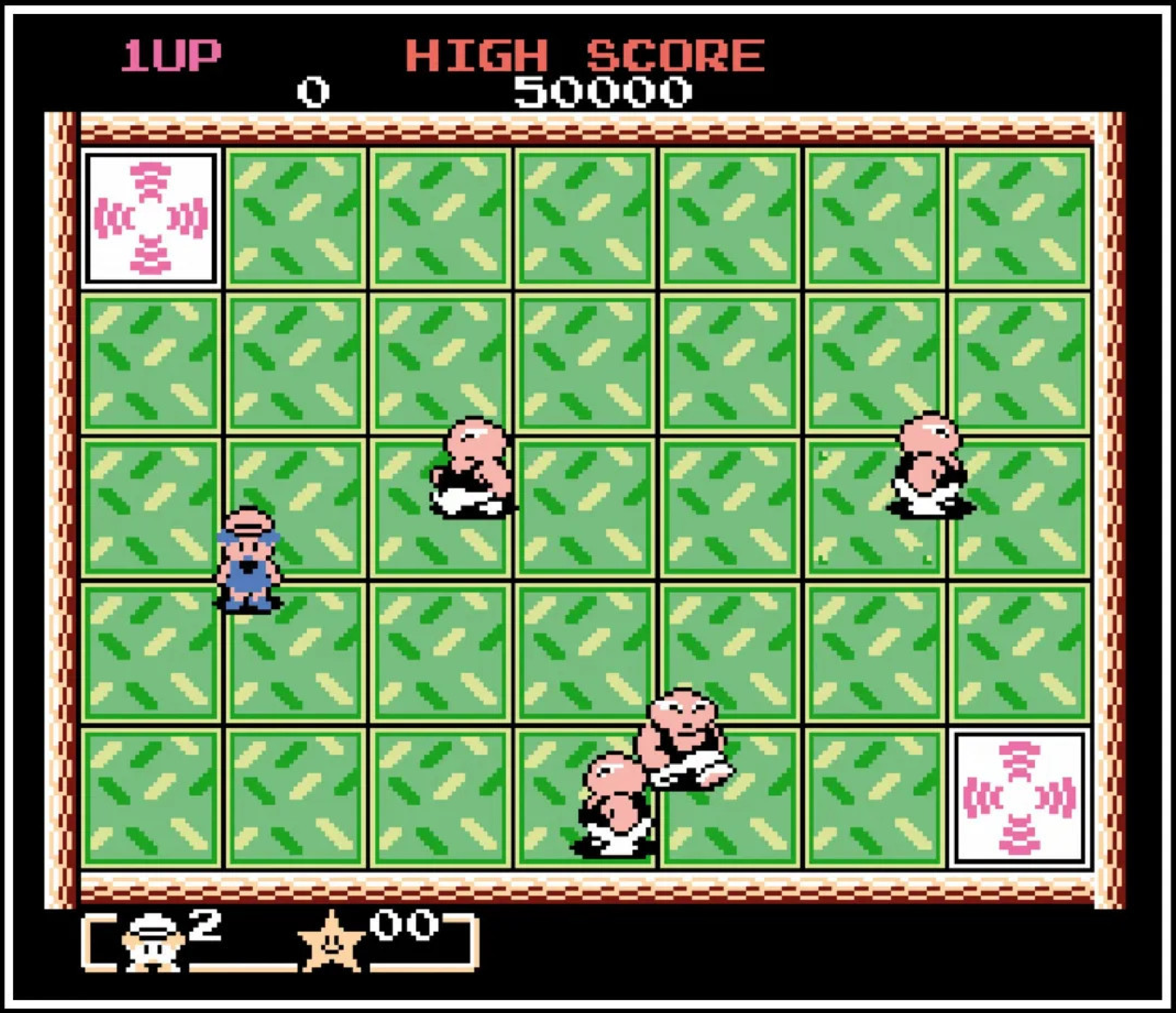
claims are valid. And yet, as we look back, the edges begin to blur as to the position Nintendo was actually in at the time. The market had only recently collapsed (at least in America), due in no small part to extreme negligence of the industry, churning out five years of expensive, atrocious quality games. Although *E.T.* may have finally been one of the games that pushed gamers over the edge, it was merely the icing on a particularly unpalatable cake, and Nintendo was adamant the same would never happen to its own console – not after the hardship it had gone through in order to resurrect the market in the first place.

To comply with the 10NES lockout system, third-party developers had to sign a strict licensing agreement that limited them to producing only five games a year while granting Nintendo complete discretion when it came to quality control. While the majority of developers balked at such oppressive restrictions, others (such as Capcom, whose first three NES titles, *Commando*, *Ghosts 'N' Goblins* and *1942* all sold over 1 million copies) accepted the stipulations and proved Nintendo's theories almost immediately.

The early successes were all the reassurance Nintendo needed to enforce its licensing agreement at all costs. Yamauchi had shown from the outset that maintaining a respected reputation was far more important to him than quick sales, and regardless of the incensed twittering of game developers eager to flood the market with mediocre games, his chokingly tight reins undoubtedly helped the console enjoy such a long life.

Unfortunately, not all developers agreed with Nintendo's philosophy, least of all the English ones.

The story of Nintendo's Japanese and American establishment has been well told, but there are a lot of other countries with a dedicated gaming population. In truth, Nintendo could reasonably ignore any other sales avenues as long as the Japanese and Americans were living and breathing videogames, and as a result the European introduction was reduced to nothing short of a stilted, insulting addendum to an otherwise grand plan.



This was the first game developed by the creator of *Pokémon*, and actually, it's rather good fun even today! Kick the tiles to knock enemies over and discover secrets.

Unenthusiastic distribution deals began to filter NES consoles into Europe in late '86, beginning in Scandinavia and Germany, then spreading into Spain and France before finally being brought to the UK by Mattel in the third quarter of 1987. A distinct lack of interest from Nintendo itself, coupled with Mattel's reputation as a toy company and a delay which took the console out of the technological heats, made for a hurdle that was far too high to vault in one leap.

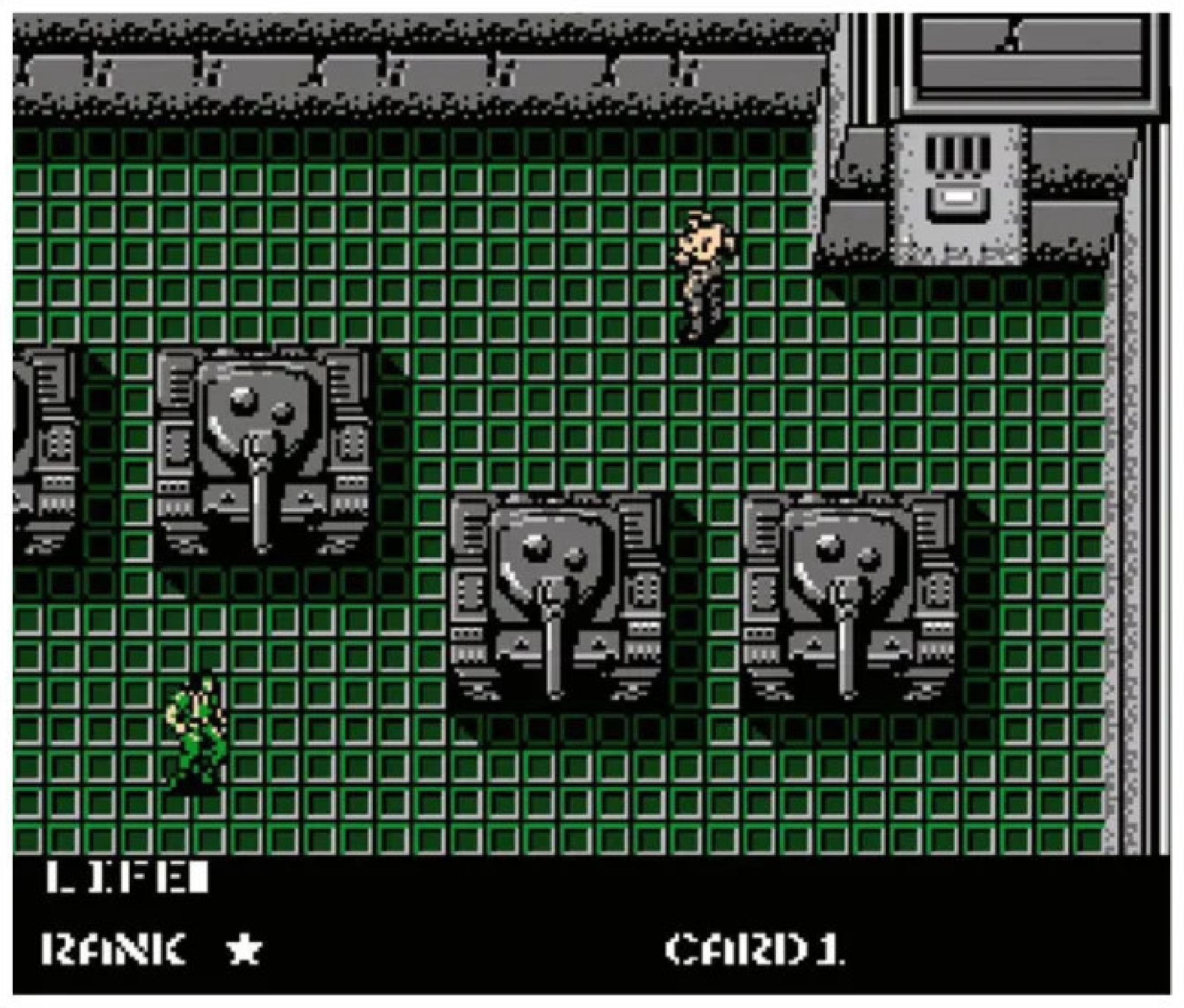
The Sega Master System had hit the UK ground running, and while the American market may have disappeared up its own… disk drive earlier in the decade, this had created a wealth of opportunity in Britain for affordable home computers. Competing with the superior, and better established, Sega machine was one thing, but taking on the likes of the ZX Spectrum and its prolific catalogue of games on its home turf, or the astounding next-generation gaming power of the Amiga, was another entirely.

Sega claims a great deal of responsibility for ensuring the NES never gained a foothold in Europe, though in truth much of the culpability lies with Nintendo's own indifference, and to the UK in particular.

Its attention was still firmly trained on the US and Japan, where attention returned to the original concept of the Famicom – the family computer. Peripherals to deliver on the promise made by the system's name were steadily released: a disk drive, cassette deck, keyboard, modem and BASIC cartridges were all developed, with varying degrees of success, to allow Japanese Famicom owners to expand the potential of their prized machines.

By the time Nintendo International was established to take over from Mattel, Sega was tearing full steam ahead with the Mega Drive. This was the first chink in Nintendo's armour since 1983, and by ignoring the European markets, the company gave Sega the opportunity to maintain its

*Metal Gear* didn't start out on the NES, fair enough, but it was the system Kojima wanted to develop for, and it was eventually ported – albeit in a butchered form.

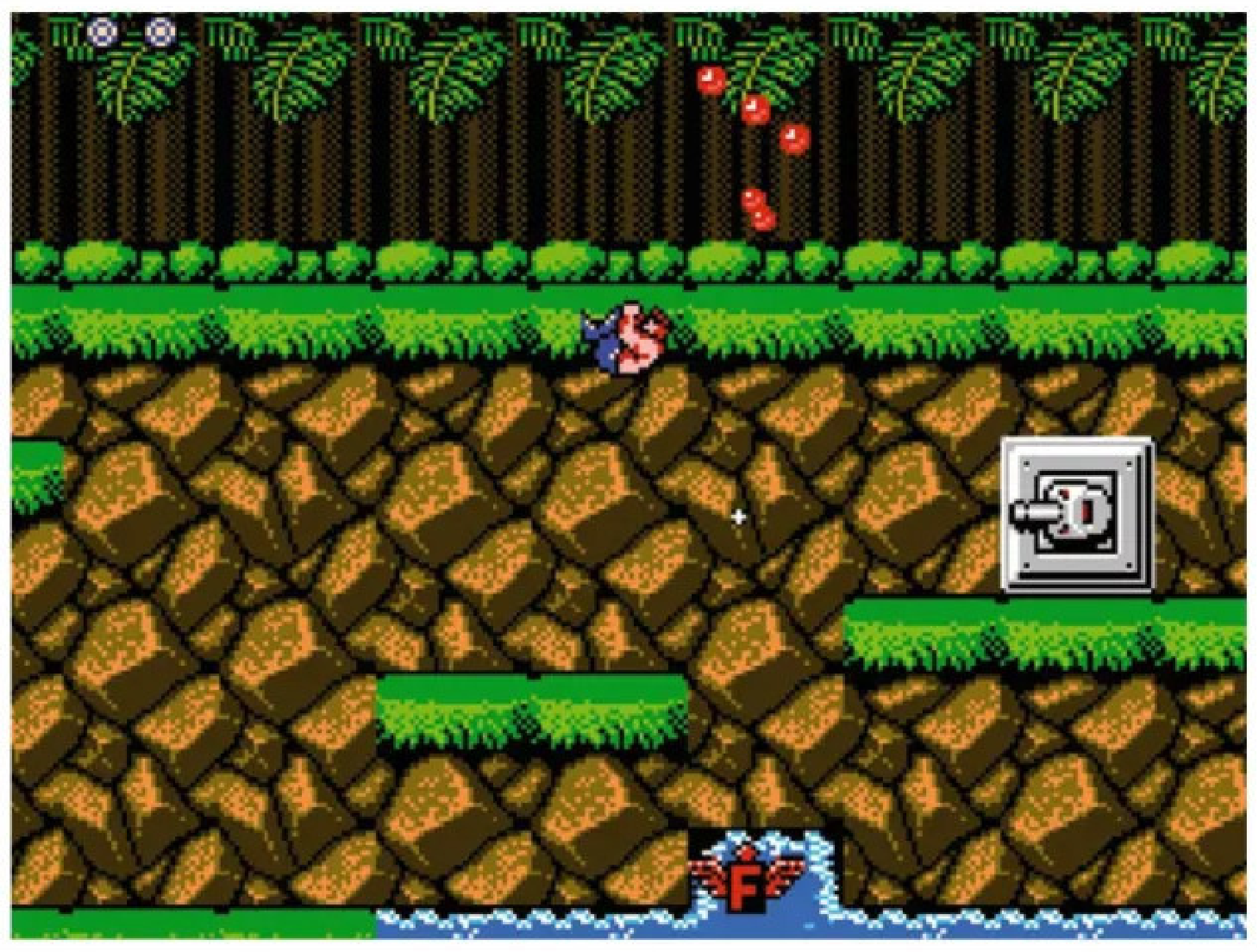


developments and plan a strategy to work its way back into the primary markets. While Nintendo threw lawsuits about the place to sustain its dominion (attempting to stop everything from Rare's reverse engineering of the 10NES lockout chip to Codemaster's Game Genie peripheral and the various attempts at releasing unlicensed third-party software), Sega embraced many of the other companies and their videogaming products, granting them a platform while shoring up its increasing market share.

Aside from the shabby marketing, the late '87 UK release date of the console would have been the perfect time to own a NES. The harsh whips of Nintendo had ensured five years of only the finest games were ready and waiting. Developers had found their programming feet, while Nintendo's internal teams had fully dedicated their elite to making first-party titles. *Super Mario Bros.* came bundled for the reasonable price of £69.99 while the westernisation of Shigeru Miyamoto's celebrated *Legend Of Zelda* (the first cartridge to contain a battery backup save game feature) landed, quite by chance, at exactly the right time to reassure UK NES users.

Million-sellers were becoming increasingly common, yet the company's belief in its own divine status began to push developers to question the gospel. Thanks to the massive profits Nintendo's quality regime had granted them, they had the power to test the limits. Nintendo's authority was slipping.

Being abandoned in Europe had given the console the opportunity to grow on its own, unhindered by the Victorian parenting its American and Japanese cousins had known.



Konami was generally regarded as the best of the third-party developers, creating classic after classic, like *Contra* here.

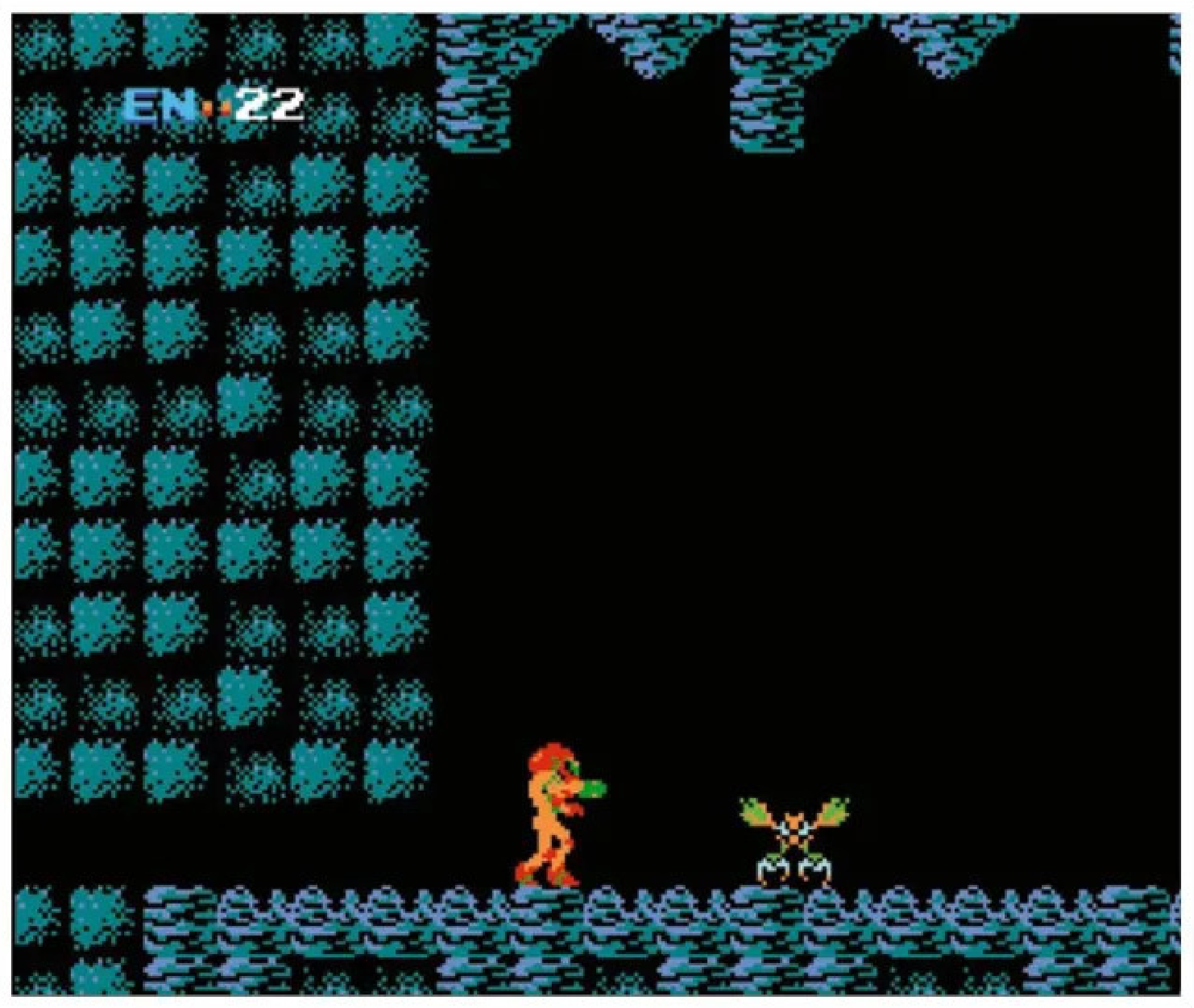
Third-party developers had lost their interest in purchasing the Nintendo Seal of Quality and flagrant importing began across Europe. The few Italian NES owners discovered they were in the same retailing bracket as the better supported UK, while Scandinavians openly swapped games among themselves and the Spanish. Cartridges were even developed that fired a voltage spike through the 10NES chip, knocking it out and allowing unrestricted international sales of one development.

The Famicom and the NES had a strong following, but times had changed dramatically from the post-apocalyptic wasteland the machine was born into. The system was simply unable to provide the technologically advanced arcade conversions gamers were demanding. Yet this new loose leash publishers were enjoying with NES cartridges provided a crutch, which enabled the console to enter old age more gracefully than any other system had managed before it.

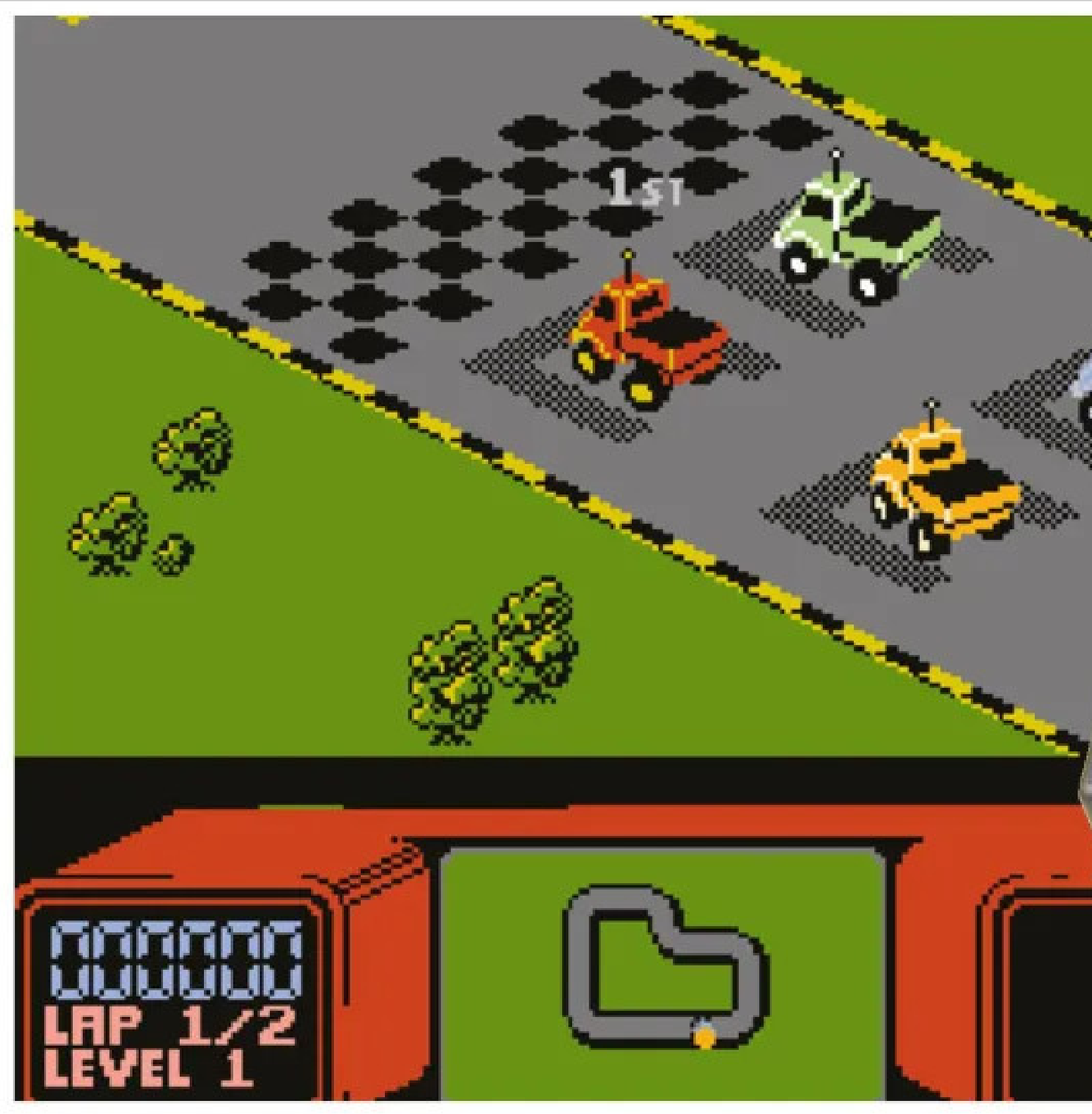
It was midway through the '90s, and although people weren't queuing up to buy NES games at midnight, neither did they resent picking up the odd Nintendo bargain even as late as 1996. By this time, the NES had once again been redesigned to account for, among other things, failing cartridge connectors which had suffered from their horizontal orientation and gathered enough oxidising dust over the years to force users to bend and twist their games to coerce reliability from the struggling components.

Another price drop to £49.99 (seeing the console actually being out-priced by one of its own games for a short while) didn't hurt the life expectancy of the old campaigner either, and as the internet began to fully emerge, fan sites, homebrew programmers, hardware hackers and dedicated gamers began to form communities in celebration of Nintendo's grandfather console. Just as before, the NES didn't break any new sales figures but, along with its games, miraculously managed to retain its original value. Even today, NES games on eBay or in a charity shop are certainly not giveaways; five quid will buy you a cartridge without a box or instructions, but little else. Not too shabby for a 30-year old format.

If anything, the impressively long life of the NES may actually have hurt Nintendo – dissuading players from upgrading to the Super NES upon demand – but it'd be hard for anyone, least of all its parent company, to resent this amazing machine for providing hundreds of thousands of hours of entertainment, billions of Yen in profit and 60 million gamers worldwide with something incredible to do with their thumbs.



Squint. No, squint harder. In fact, squint hard enough and this almost looks like *Metroid Prime*. Almost… well, if you're a tramp drunk on meths.

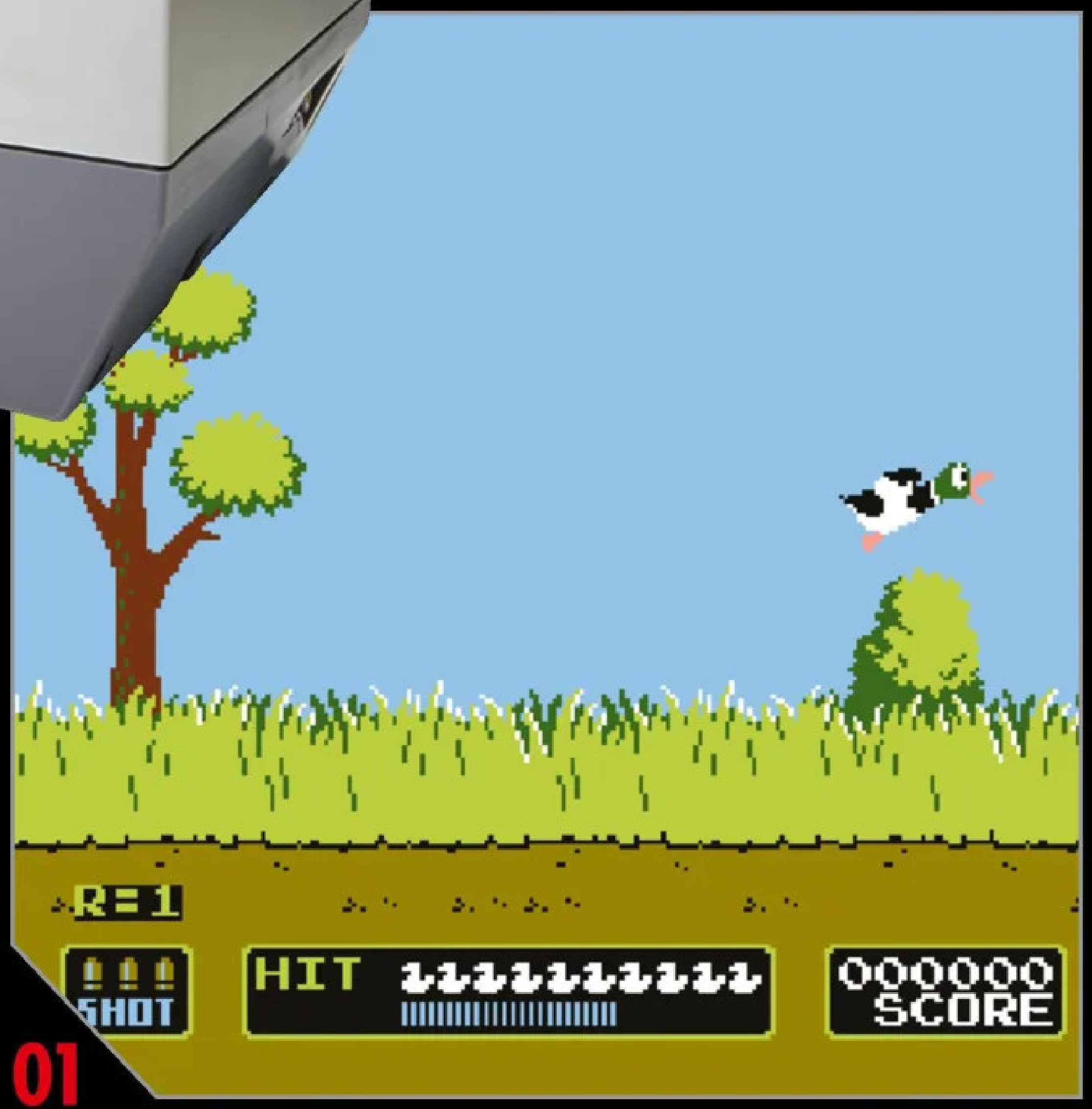


Rare was one of the earliest British developers to make games for the NES. It was purchased by Nintendo in 1994, where it stayed until 2002.

SUPER MARIO BROS.
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
Nintendo
ACTION SERIES
NES-SM-UKV
Made in Japan

# PERFECT TEN GAMES

For owners without the cartridge cleaning kit; here are ten of the best wedges of grey plastic you'll ever blow into



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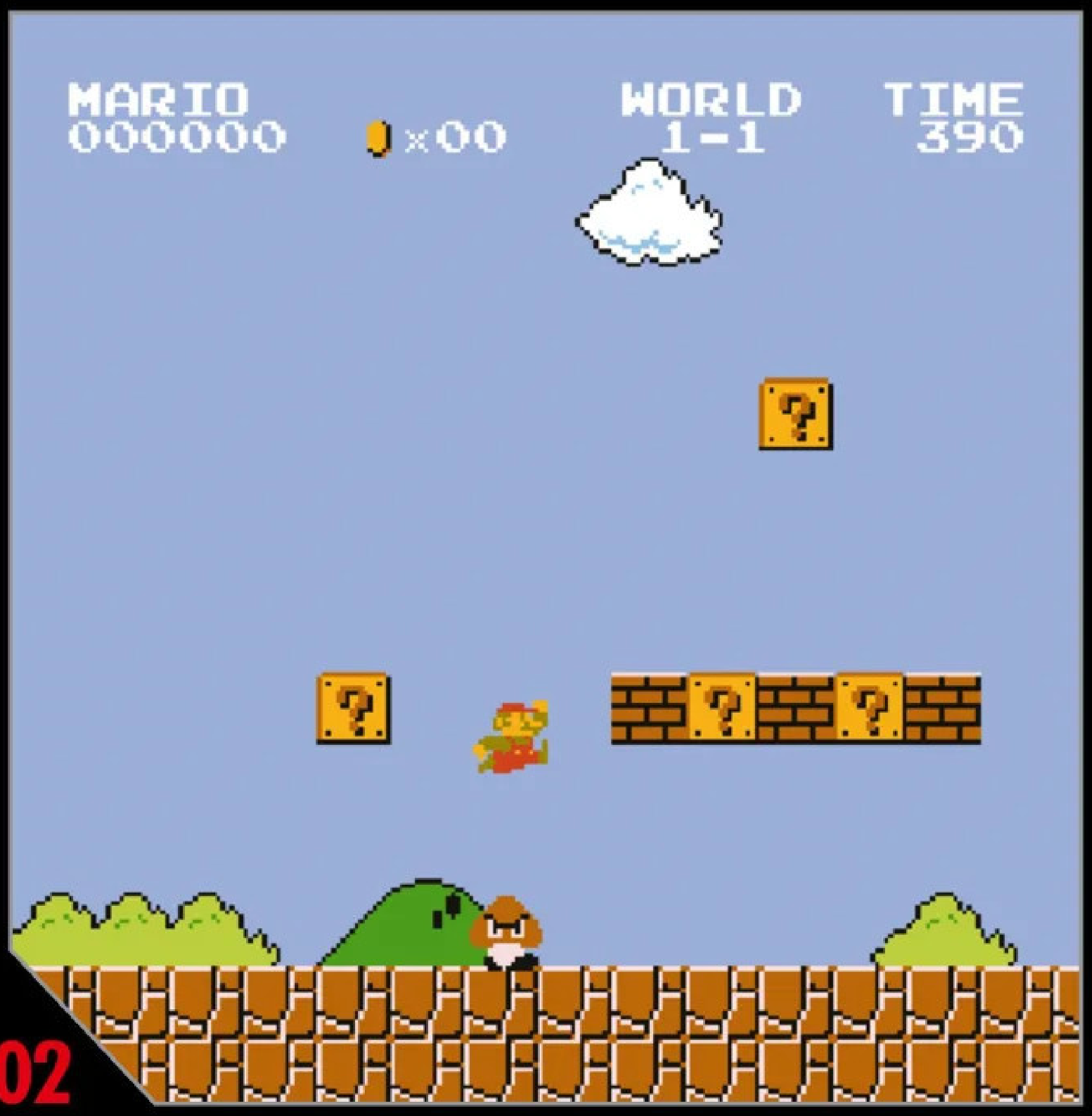

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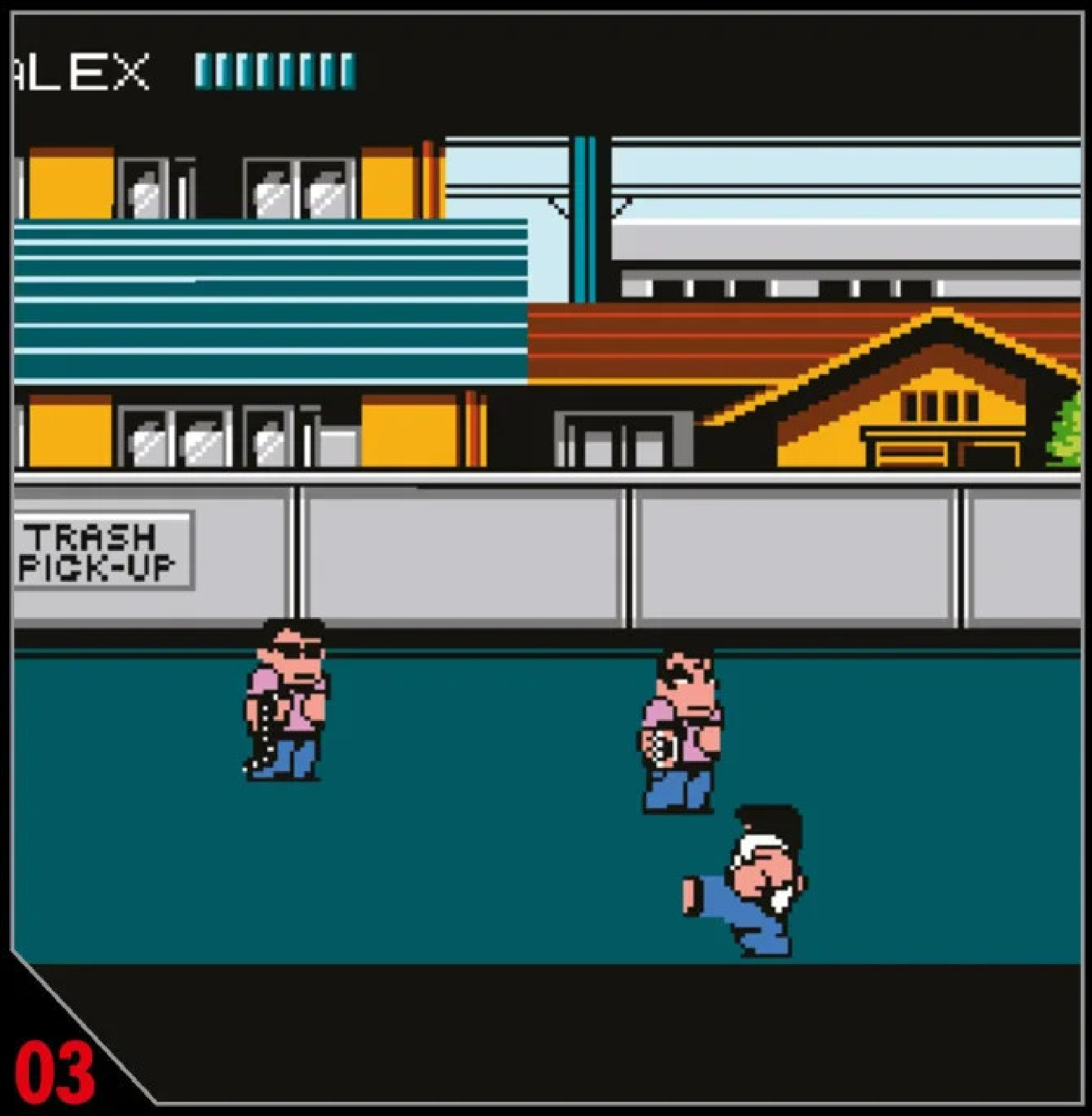

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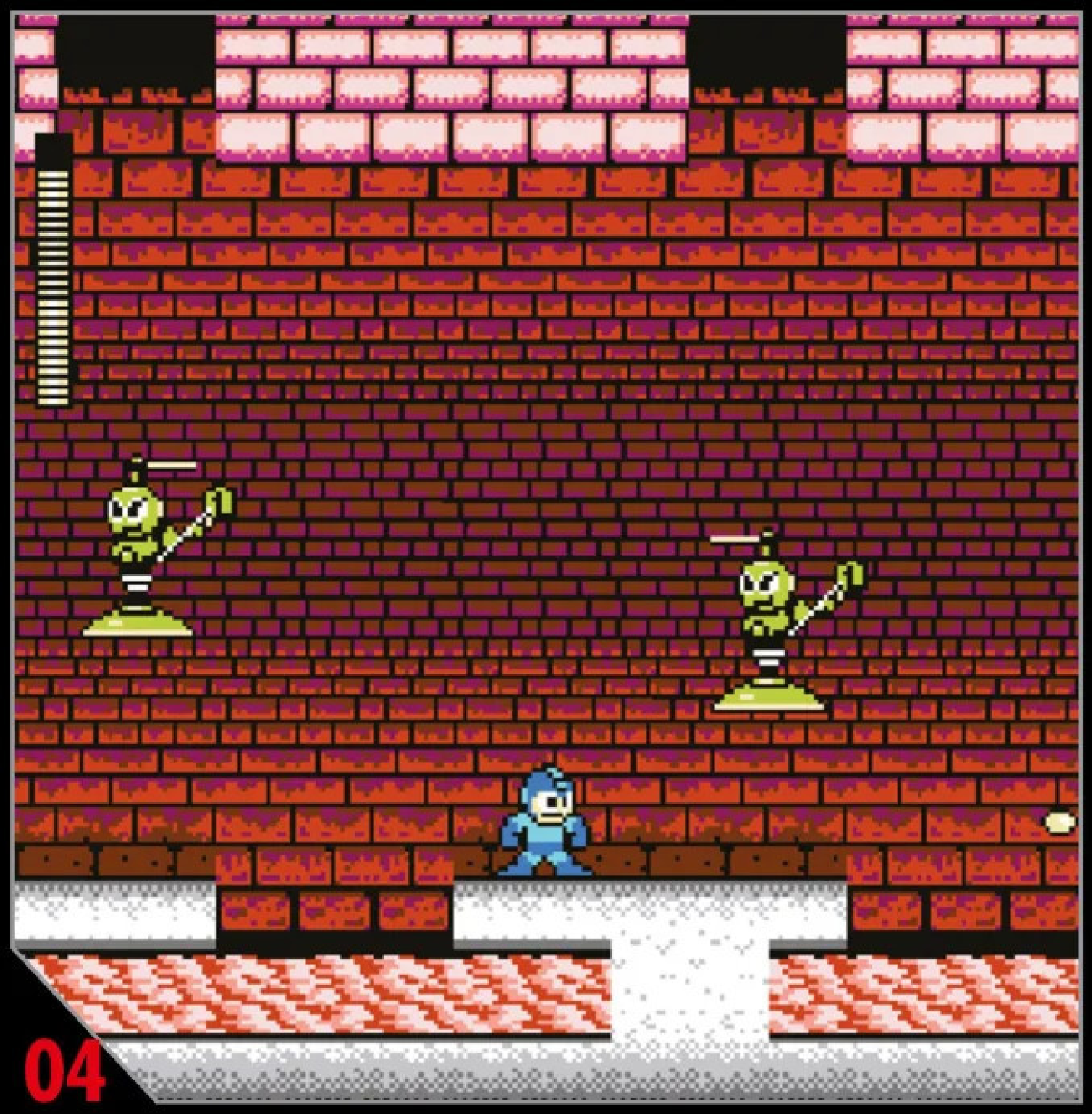


04

## Duck Hunt

**Released:** 1984
**Published by:** Nintendo
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Donkey Kong

**01** Billed as the quintessential game for the clunky NES Zapper, Nintendo's repetitive duck-murdering sim allowed gamers to test their aim with the aid of canine-cohort, Mr Peepers. It was his job to startle a ball of petrified feathers into the air and yours to sight them in your pistol's crosshair. You had three shots per target and the later levels, which included infinitesimal clay pigeons, called for either a swift dead-aim or the cowardly act of pressing the gun barrel against the television. The game had a neat feature, which allowed duck-welfare enthusiasts to control the direction of the fleeing birds with a second pad and save them.

## Super Mario Bros

**Released:** 1985
**Published by:** Nintendo
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** F-Zero

**02** It was the block punching, pipe-travelling exploits of two Italian plumbers that finally administered the medicine to the videogame crash of the '80s, ridding it of the noxious Martian antibodies of Atari's *ET*. Shigeru Miyamoto knew how to conjure up golden game icons and the Mario Bros are two of his most prolific. Placing the plumbers into a daring princess/mushroom rescue mission, inside a vivid, smooth-scrolling fantasy world, the game pioneered concepts such as level warping and head stomping. *Super Mario Bros* embodies everything that makes a game timeless: catchy theme, fluid gameplay, iconic characters.

## River City Ransom

**Released:** 1985
**Published by:** Technos
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Double Dragon

**03** Punch-bags meet sick-bags when Alex and Ryan receive a note from evil crime-lord Slick informing them that their city is being held to ransom and Ryan's girlfriend has been abducted. Welcome to River City, a place of tongue-in-cheek humour, cartoon violence and hard-up vomiting freshmen. Using anything they can lay their fists on, our protagonists set about the streets fighting through Slick's army of students. Their strategy: force them to 'barf' and pocket their loose change. *River City*'s unique fusion of a scrolling beat-'em-up and a subtle RPG mechanics combine to make it a superlative NES classic.

## Mega man 2

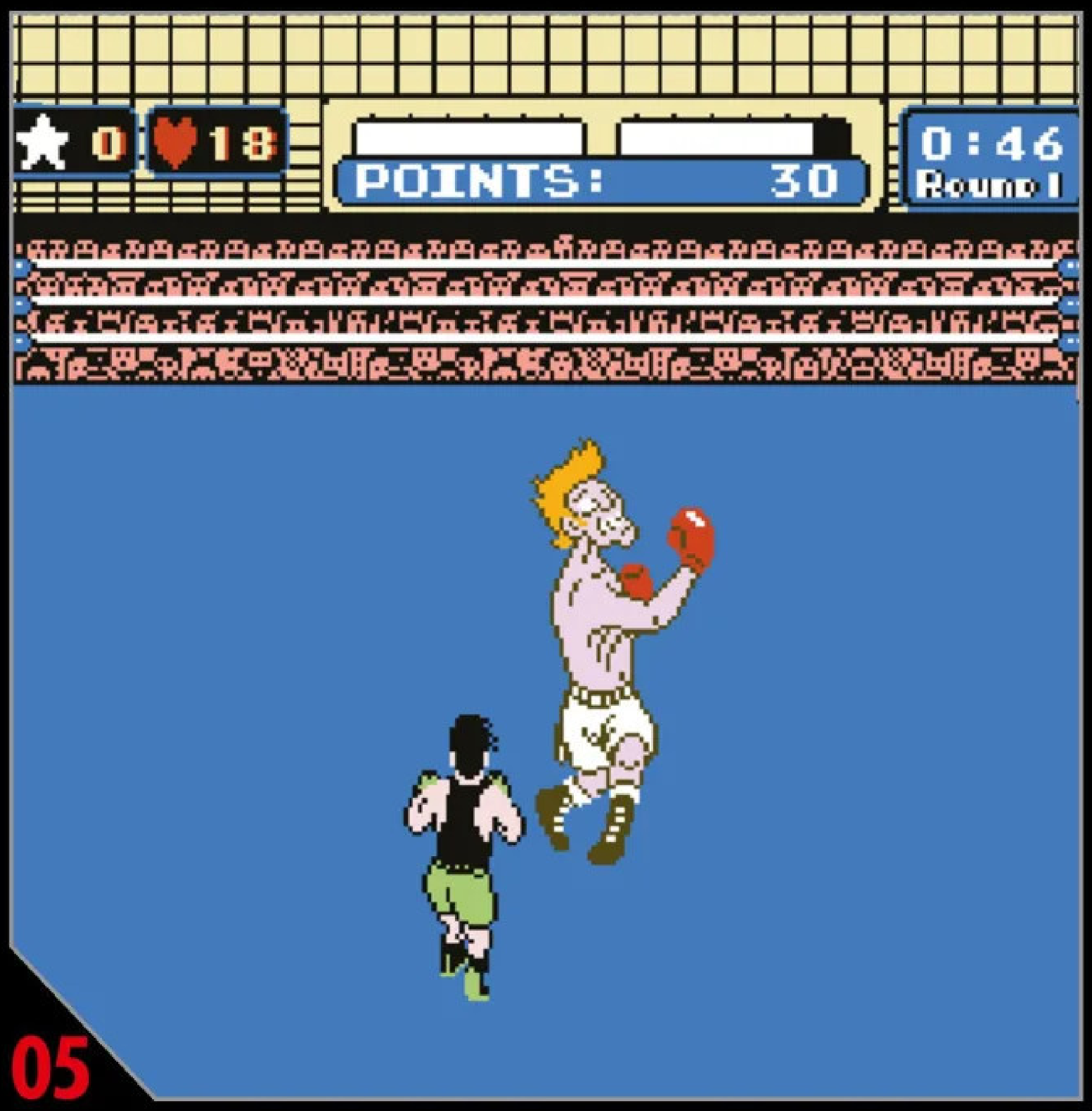
**Released:** 1998
**Published by:** Nintendo
**Created by:** Capcom
**By the same developer:** Devil May Cry

**04** Don't let Mega Man's mountainous energy bar fool you, trying to finish *Mega Man 2* is like trying to stay alive without any kidneys. This is an unforgiving platform blaster where each level demands pinpoint precision and patience. The order in which you blast through Dr Wily's levels is completely up to you, but don't think you can use the easier stages to stockpile lives. Each level houses a bionic-boss whose special power can be acquired. These abilities give Mega Man an advantage over another boss, so choosing the optimal route through the game was how you maintained a healthy blood pressure.

## Punch-Out!!

**Released:** 1986
**Published by:** intendo
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Lylat Wars

**05** Nintendo's port of its popular '80s arcade puncher was somewhat lost in translation when it appeared in all its 8-bit glory. The arcade's transparent fighter was omitted and in his corner stood a pale, pint-sized pugilist on a mission to topple heavyweight hard-man, Mike Tyson. It quickly collected acclaim for its accessibility and colourful roster of cartoon boxers who were forced to sop up each blow of the games trademark playability. The NES is home to the finest version of *Punch-Out!!*, which still manages to pack more of a punch than its technically enhanced SNES and Wii sequels, as well as its arcade counterpart.



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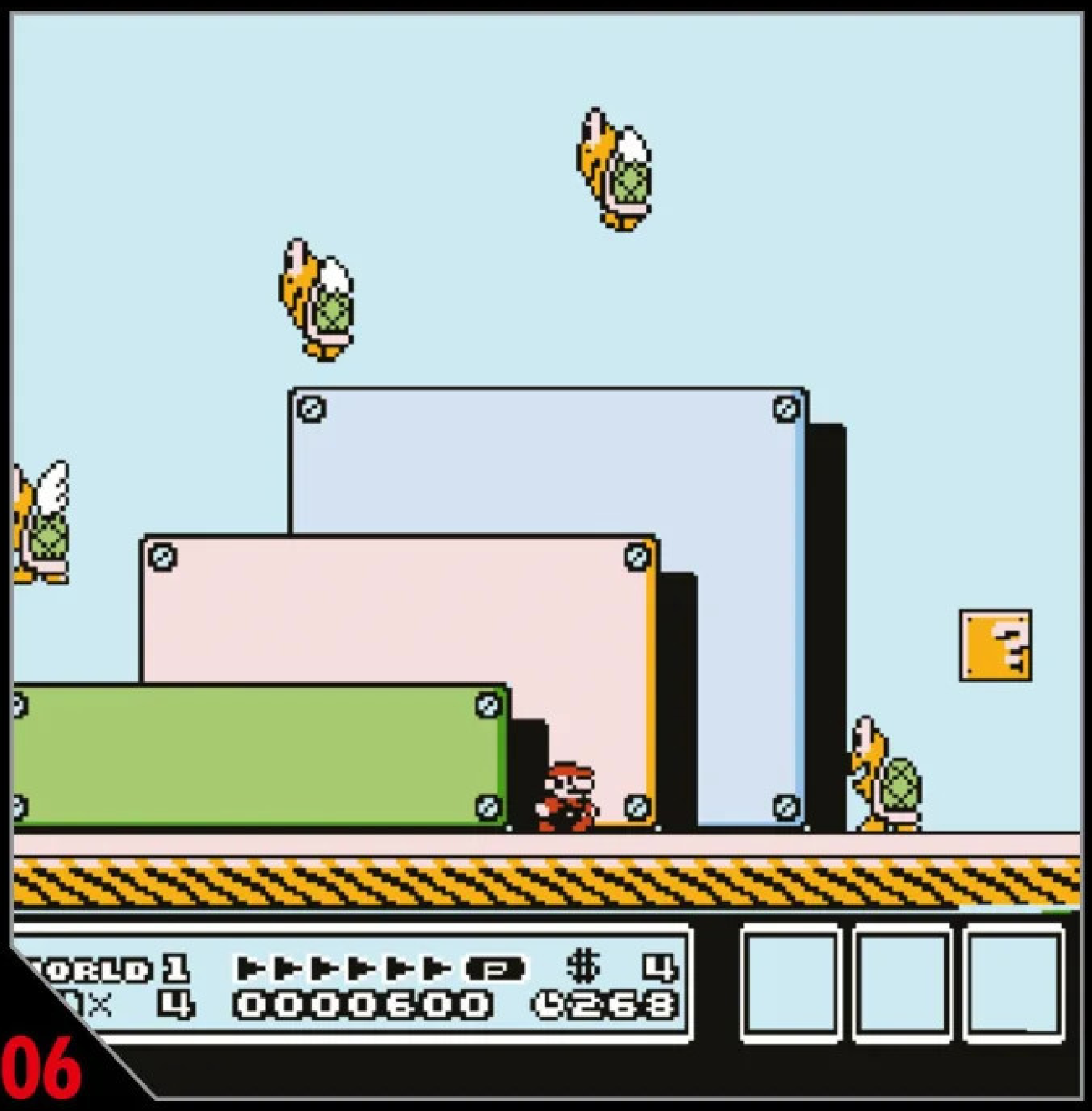

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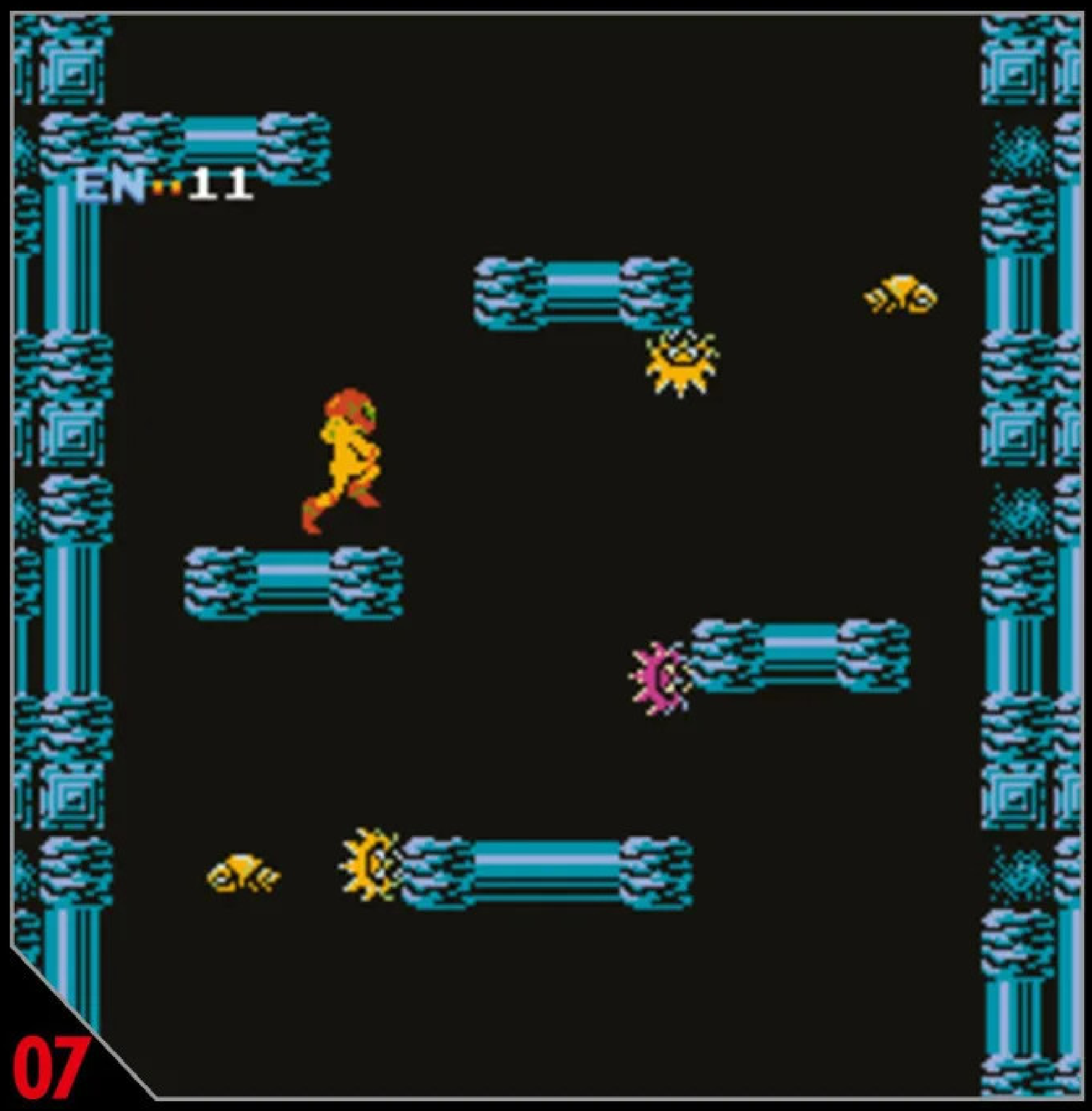

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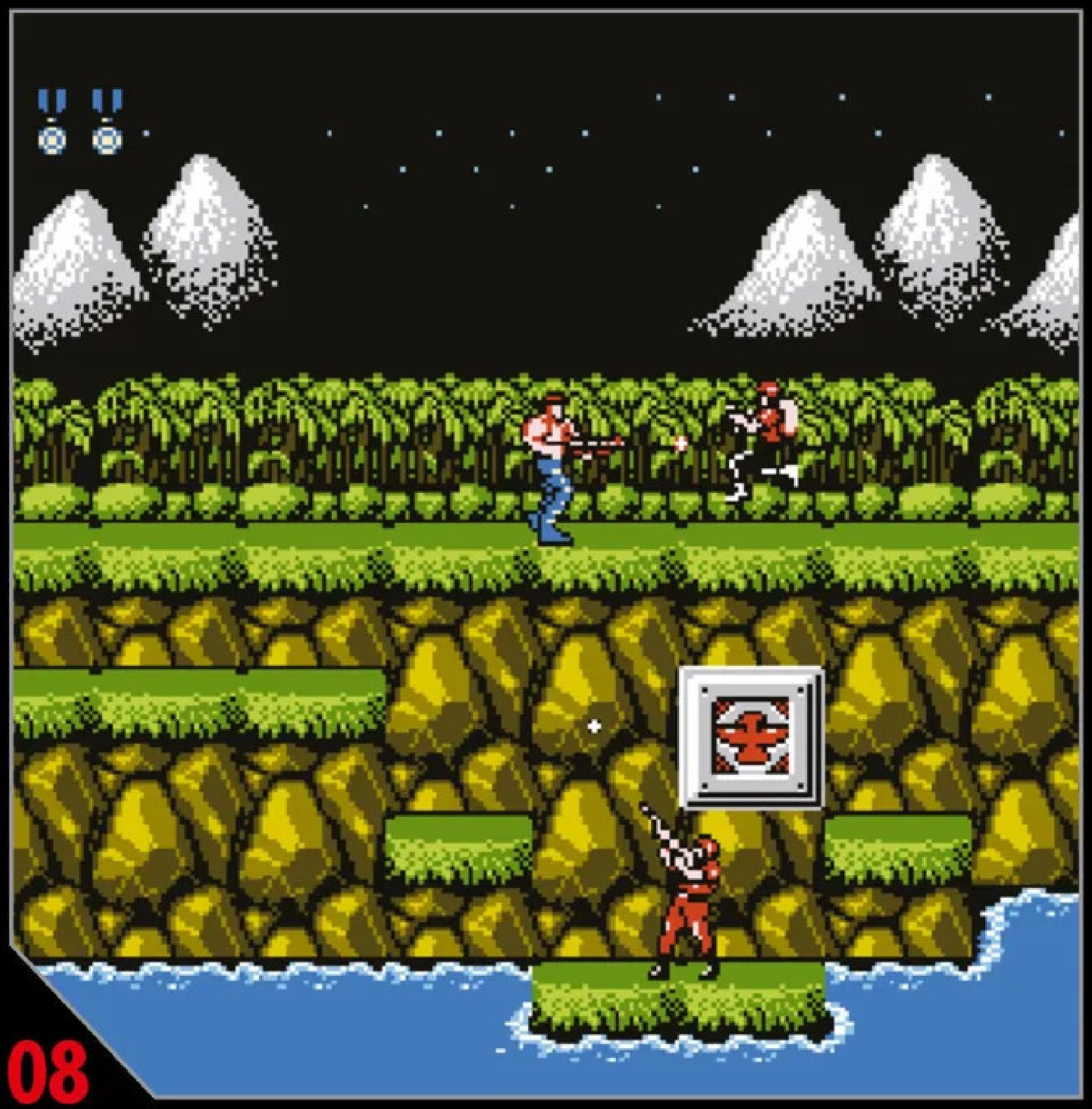

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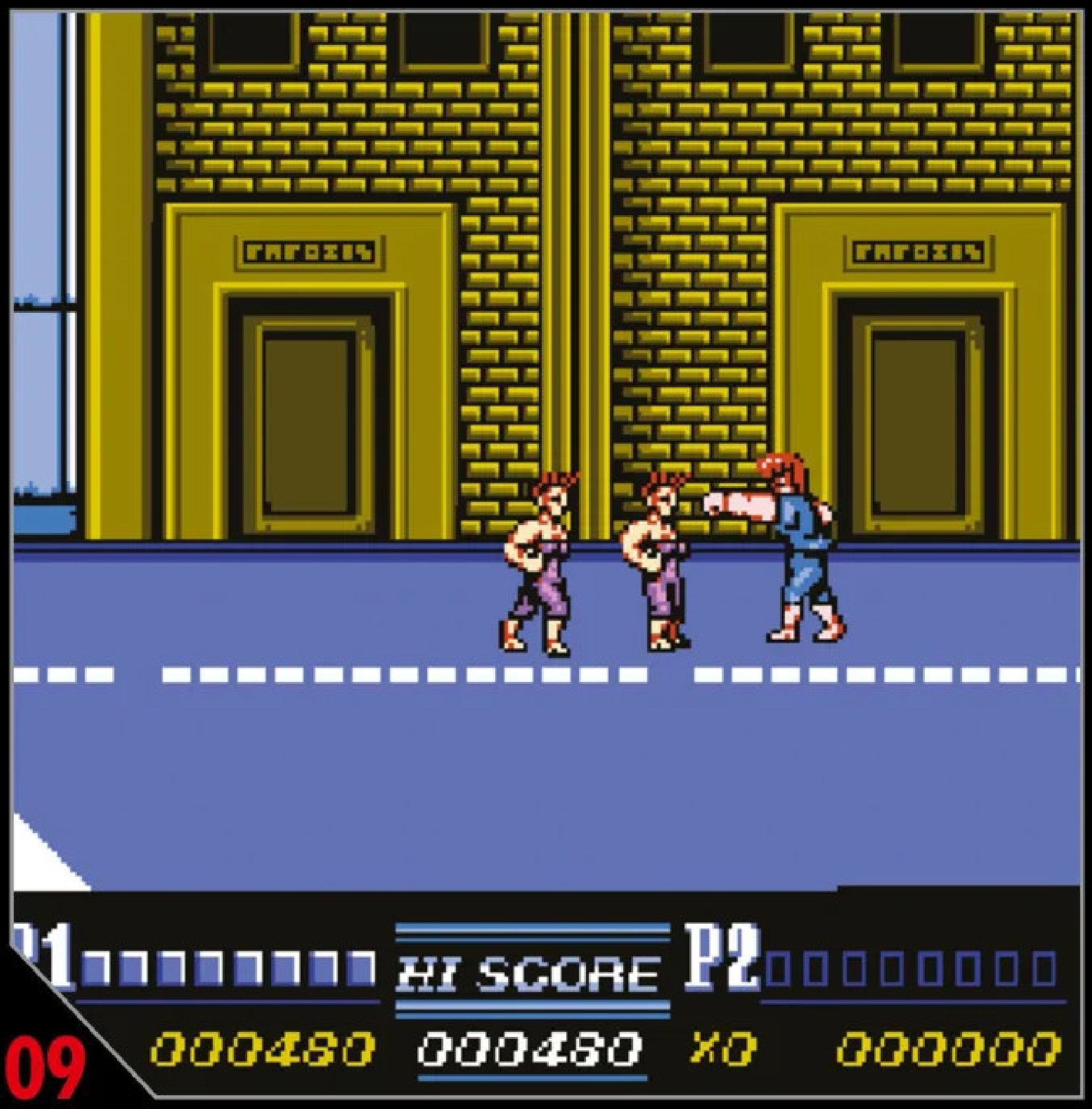

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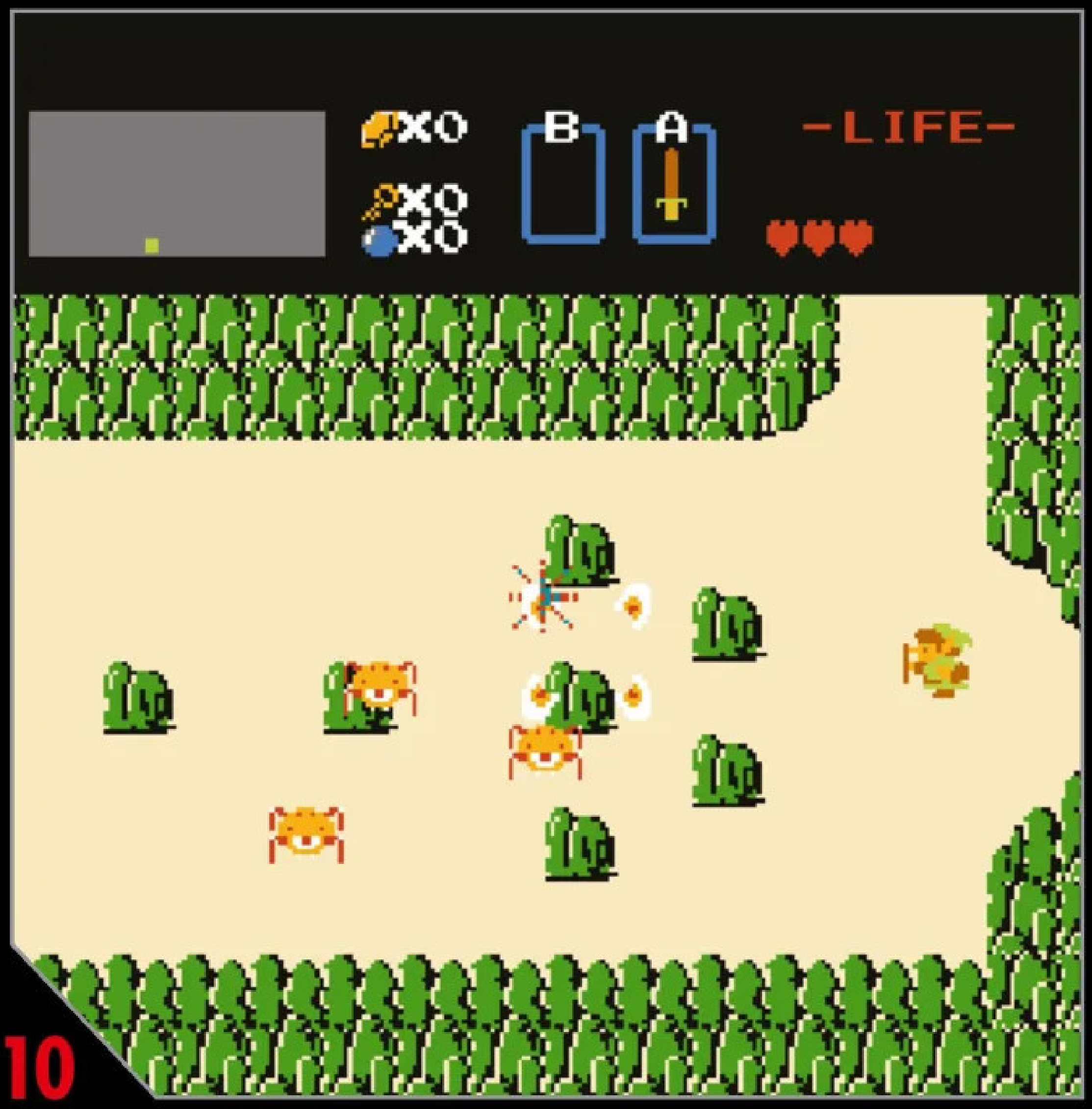


10

## Super Mario Bros 3

**Released:** 1990
**Published by:** Nintendo
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Pilot Wings

**06** Mario's goodbye gift to the NES is a marvel. It encapsulated all the qualities of the first game while introducing a wealth of brilliant new elements that are now seen as essential to the series as Mario's flat cap and black moustache. *Super Mario Bros 3* incorporated sub-bosses, multiple routes and mini-games, while embracing the notions of secrets and level warping. In fact, the game's so great, millions of Americans stood in unity to create a large image of his head using colourful T-shirts. Visible from space, some say it was a warning to ET to never release another game on our planet.

## Metroid

**Released:** 1986
**Published by:** Nintendo
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Super Metroid

**07** Long before Ms Croft raided her first tomb there was another tough female playing a central role in an iconic franchise. Donning unflattering yellow armour and forced to wear a red spaceship on her head, you really couldn't tell whether Samus Aran was man, woman or beast. But one bash of the B button, sparking her elegant flip, gave us all the proof we needed. *Metroid* is a landmark NES title, the space shooter introduced password saves, non-linear levels and multiple endings. Its dark, menacing setting housed some truly freaky inhabitants, and the Giger-style levels reinforced the bleak, lonely atmosphere.

## Contra

**Released:** 1988
**Published by:** Konami
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Metal Gear

**08** It must be written into our genes that when visited by an alien it's customary to either destroy them or try to adopt them. Mario Bros on steroids, the homeport of Konami's arcade hit *Contra* is considered to be the finest run-and-gun on the NES. It tells the story of two marines who are assigned the mission of welcoming an alien species by unloading an ungodly amount of ammunition into their deformed domes. The game presents some inspired character and level designs, the most memorable being the breach of an alien base, which switched the perspective from a side-scrolling blaster to a Cabal-style shooting gallery.

## Double Dragon 2 – The Revenge

**Released:** 1989
**Published by:** Technos
**Created by:** In-House
**By the same developer:** Renegade

**09** Taking on a darker tone than its predecessor, *Double Dragon 2* still follows the theme of the Lee brothers' ill luck with the opposite sex. After their abducted girlfriend, Marian, is callously killed by Shadow Warrior, the brothers are forced into action. It's widely considered to be the finest of the three *Double Dragon* games released on the NES, due to its intuitive controls. It also introduced a two-player co-op option and iconic moves like the Whirlwind Kick and the Hyper Uppercut – which looked a lot cooler than Billy and Jimmy's usual technique of pushing an enemy's head into their groin.

## The Legend of Zelda

**Released:** 1987
**Published by:** intendo
**Created by:** in-house
**By the same developer:** Sky Skipper

**10** Sheathed inside a majestic gold cartridge, *The Legend Of Zelda*'s tale of a nefarious villain, an ensnared princess and an elfin boy, bound together by unlikely heroism, was a chameleon of game genres that pioneered open-ended gameplay. Link's first quest not only popularised adventure games, it established pivotal precedents. It outmoded high-score tables by exposing a greater desire in gamers for exploration and completion, and created perhaps the most respected and well-loved series in gaming. It continues to be a touchstone of outstanding game design to this day.

# GLO WORM

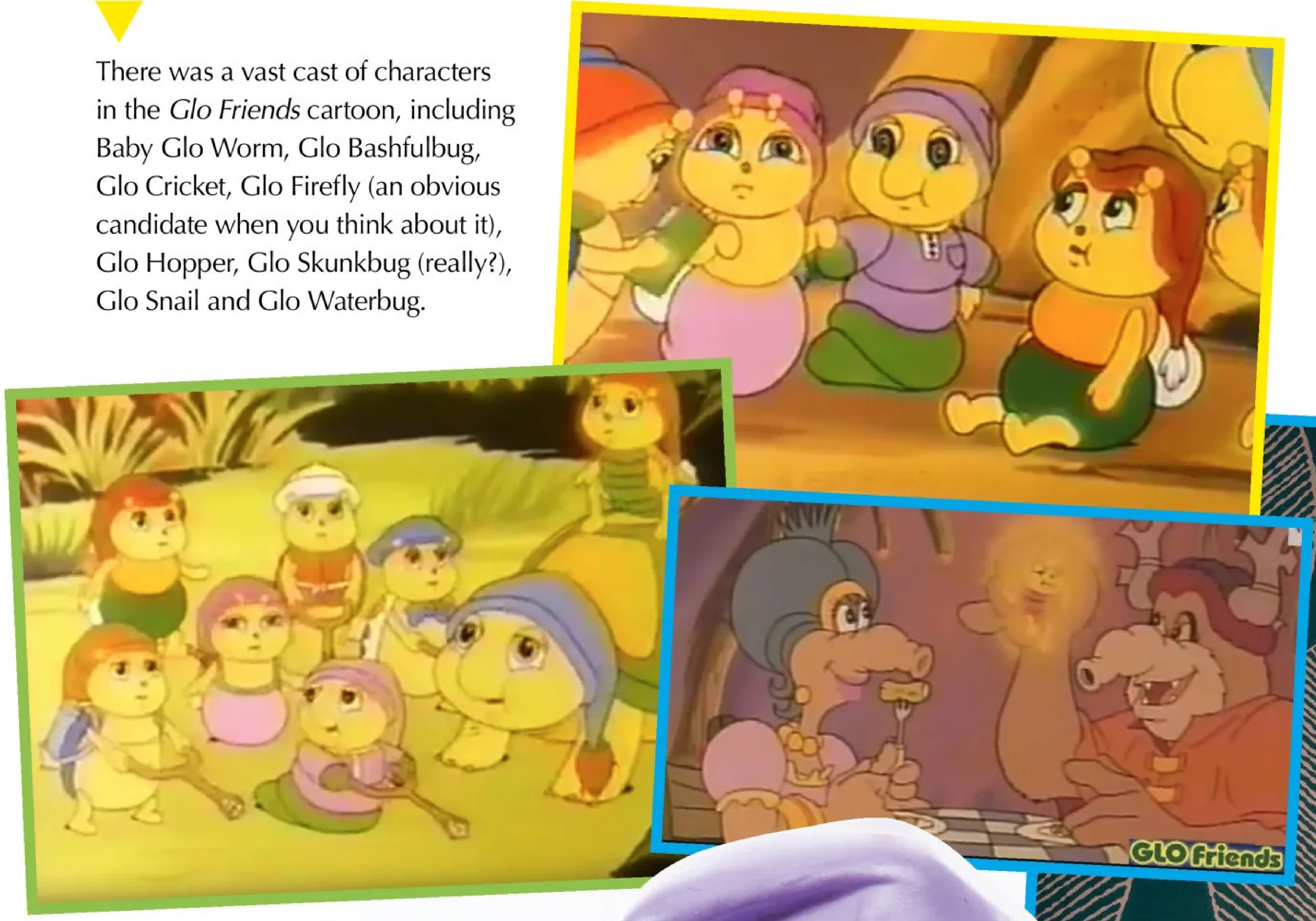
Combining a night light with a cuddly toy was an inspired idea, and Hasbro's friendly Glo Worm ticked both boxes with aplomb. With its soft and cuddly body, any child would be happy to snuggle up to a Glo Worm at night, and a tight squeeze would make its head emit a warm, comforting glow. Dressed in pyjamas and a night cap, the Glo Worm could also help persuade unwilling children to accept that it was bed time.

Introduced in 1982, Glo Worms became a full-blown craze, joining Cabbage Patch Kids, Care Bears and Star Wars action figures as the must-have toys of Christmas 1983. Kids couldn't get enough of the cuddly creatures, and parents were happy to have a bedtime ally. They were also grateful that the Glo Worm's soft outer body could be easily removed for washing.

*Time* magazine named the Glo Worm one of the All-Time 100 Greatest Toys, and unsurprisingly a stream of spin-offs quickly followed, including a Light and Learn game, Musical Glo Worm, Glo Bug and Glo Butterfly. A range of smaller, soft vinyl creatures known as Glo Friends soon arrived. Rather than being squeeze-activated, these characters simply emitted an eerie glow when the bedtime lights were turned out, which wasn't quite as comforting as the original. They appealed to collectors, however, and could be teamed up with the Glo Turtle, whose shell opened up to store Glo Friends inside. They also starred in their own cartoon series in 1986, although this only lasted one season.

> **"Time magazine named the Glo Worm one of the All-Time 100 Greatest Toys, and a stream of spin-offs quickly followed"**

There was a vast cast of characters in the *Glo Friends* cartoon, including Baby Glo Worm, Glo Bashfulbug, Glo Cricket, Glo Firefly (an obvious candidate when you think about it), Glo Hopper, Glo Skunkbug (really?), Glo Snail and Glo Waterbug.



Mog's Christmas
Judith Kerr
THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR
by Eric Carle

McDonald's had invented the Happy Meal (where kid-sized portions would be accompanied by a toy) in 1979. Ten years later, the Glo Friends were the stars of a line of toys given out at the Wendy's burger chain in America. We're not sure if the unappetisingly named Glo Skunkbug made it into the list of 12 available characters.

The list of spin-off toys and accessories launched by Hasbro in the wake of the massive success of the Glo Worm included the obvious books and videos, but also stretched to night lights – which sort of made the Glo Worm itself a little bit redundant.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Hasbro
**First released:** 1982
**Expect to pay:** £10-40

The hard, plastic battery case tucked away inside the Glo Worm was also a potential problem, turning the cuddly character into a formidable weapon if hurled by an angry child. Bafflingly, Hasbro did not think to put extra padding around this area of the toy.

### THE LEGACY

Despite the traditional fading of the initial craze, Glo Worm remained popular through the '90s, but suffered a major setback in 2005, when the phthalates used in its soft head were found to be potentially dangerous to children. A revamped model was soon brought out, and a smaller, rather more human-looking Glo Worm can still be bought today. The selection of cuddly, glowing night-time buddies is also vast, with many other companies recognising the simple brilliance of Hasbro's original product.

© Alamy

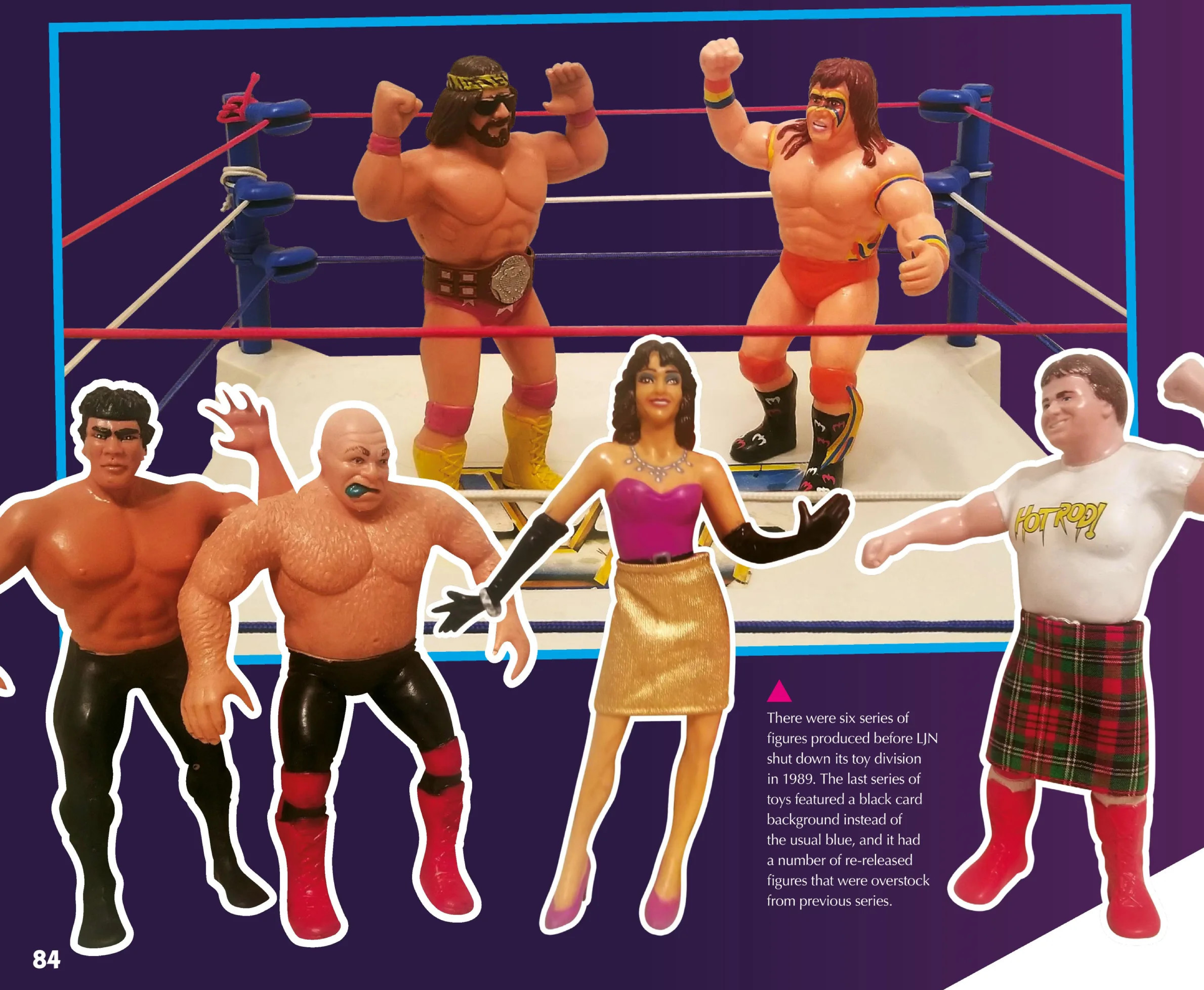
# WWF

## Information

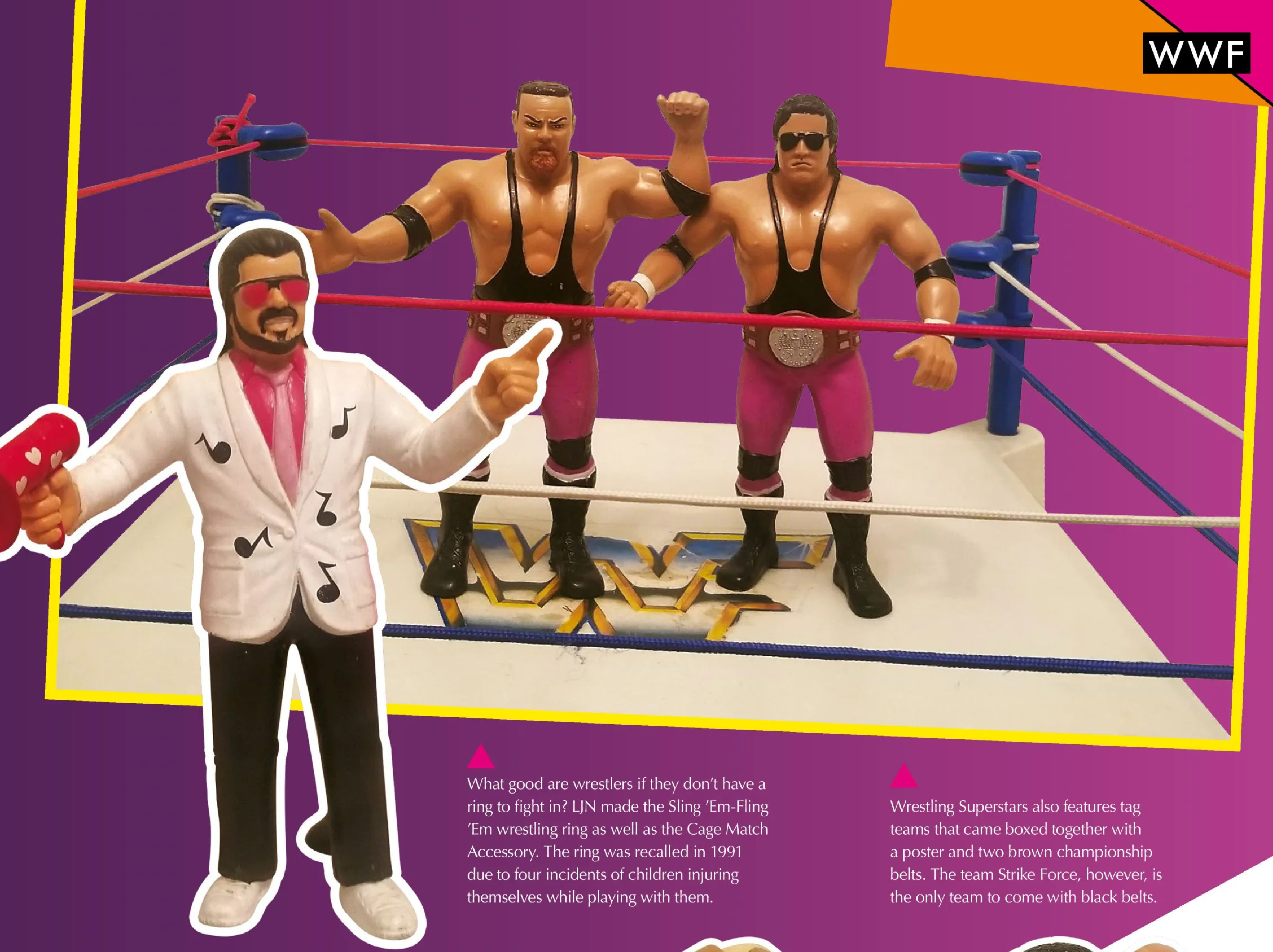
**Manufacturer:** LJN **First released:** 1984
**Expect to pay:** £10-30 unboxed/£150 boxed)

Back before the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) was the biggest company in professional wrestling, there were the territories. Starting in the 1940s, different regions of the US and Canada would have their own promotion, with the NWA (National Wrestling Alliance) acting as a governing body. Then in 1982, Vincent K McMahon bought the WWF, based in New York, from his father and split from the NWA. With the help of national TV exposure, he went through all of the territories – buying the promotions; taking their biggest stars; giving them new, larger-than-life characters; creating an all-star lineup; and becoming the first nationwide wrestling promotion. Thanks to cross-promotion with MTV, the first WrestleMania in 1985 brought pro wrestling into the mainstream. Business boomed for the WWF, and in 1987 the company held WrestleMania III at the Pontiac Silverdome with around 80,000 in attendance.

Hulk Hogan led the promotion; his bright colours and endless energy enamoured children from around the world. With a roster of colourful and vivid characters, a toy line was a no-brainer. LJN made a line of action figures, known as Wrestling Superstars, and while they couldn't be articulated, they were affordable, clearly resembled who they were supposed to and, compared to other action figures around at the time, the Wrestling Superstars were huge at 20 centimetres tall. Each figure came with a poster, and on the cardboard back was a cutout card that had a biography of the wrestler.



There were six series of figures produced before LJN shut down its toy division in 1989. The last series of toys featured a black card background instead of the usual blue, and it had a number of re-released figures that were overstock from previous series.



What good are wrestlers if they don't have a ring to fight in? LJN made the Sling 'Em-Fling 'Em wrestling ring as well as the Cage Match Accessory. The ring was recalled in 1991 due to four incidents of children injuring themselves while playing with them.

Wrestling Superstars also features tag teams that came boxed together with a poster and two brown championship belts. The team Strike Force, however, is the only team to come with black belts.

As well as the 20cm action figures, LJN also made 'Thumb Wrestlers' – a series of small toys you could stick on your thumb and have thumb wars with. Sold in packs of two, there were 12 wrestlers in the line, featuring Hulk Hogan, Ricky Steamboat and Randy Savage.

HULKAMANIA

## THE LEGACY

Even today, wrestlers from the '80s such as Hulk Hogan, Andre the Giant and Randy Savage are considered the company's most recognisable ever stars. The promotion would go through its biggest boom period in the late '90s, during what it dubbed the 'Attitude Era'. The company changed its name to World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) in 2002, and it's still going strong. Today it hosts more than 500 live events per year, and in 2016 it held its biggest show to date, WrestleMania 32, which had an audience of over 93,000.

# MONCHHICHI

Legend has it that the idea for the Monchhichi monkey popped into the head of a Sekiguchi Corporation executive when he saw a doll in Germany. Whatever the truth, the adorable creatures were an instant hit in their native Japan (building on the success of the existing Kuta Kuta monkeys range,) and wasted no time in spreading out across the world.

Designed to appeal mainly to young girls, the loving expressions on the monkeys' faces tapped into a child's nurturing instinct, and their ability to suck their thumbs only made them cuter. A raft of animated TV shows helped boost the popularity of the range, which found its way to Europe in 1975 and had reached America by 1980. Marketed as 'Chicaboo' in the UK, 'Kiki' in France and 'Mon Cicci' in Italy, the line became something of a craze in the '80s, and spawned endless accessories, including outfits, inflatable tents and stationery.

Early in its life, the Monchhichi range underwent a serious modification, when a dummy was substituted for the original thumb in 1980 after experts warned of the effects of thumb-sucking on a child's teeth. Less drastic was the introduction of brown eyes (the monkeys all had blue eyes in the early years) in 1985. Sales started to tail off by the mid-'80s as the craze ran its inevitable course, but a solid core of enthusiasts ensured the monkeys endured.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Sekiguchi Corporation
**First released:** 1974
**Expect to pay:** £5

▶ Nostalgia plays a big part in the enduring success of the brand, with the monkeys appealing to older age groups as well as attracting new fans. The broad appeal has resulted in the sale of more than 70 million Monchhichi and accessories in over 40 countries.

▼ Counterfeit Monchhichis flourished in the wake of the original toy craze, and they were not easy to spot. One brand, however, was quite easy to identify – the one that allowed the Monchhichi thumb to be stuck up the monkey's nose as well as into its mouth. Funnily enough, kids didn't seem to mind.

## THE LEGACY

The Monchhichi brand is still going strong, especially in its native Japan, with new additions holding the interest of collectors and new converts alike. The 30th anniversary of the range was marked by the release of a baby, Bebichhichi, while grey-haired grandparents were introduced in 2015. New outfits are also constantly refreshing Monchhichi wardrobes. The cute monkeys are often cited as forerunners of other toy crazes, including Cabbage Patch Kids and Pound Puppies, which also tapped in to the nurturing nature of youngsters.

Monchhichi
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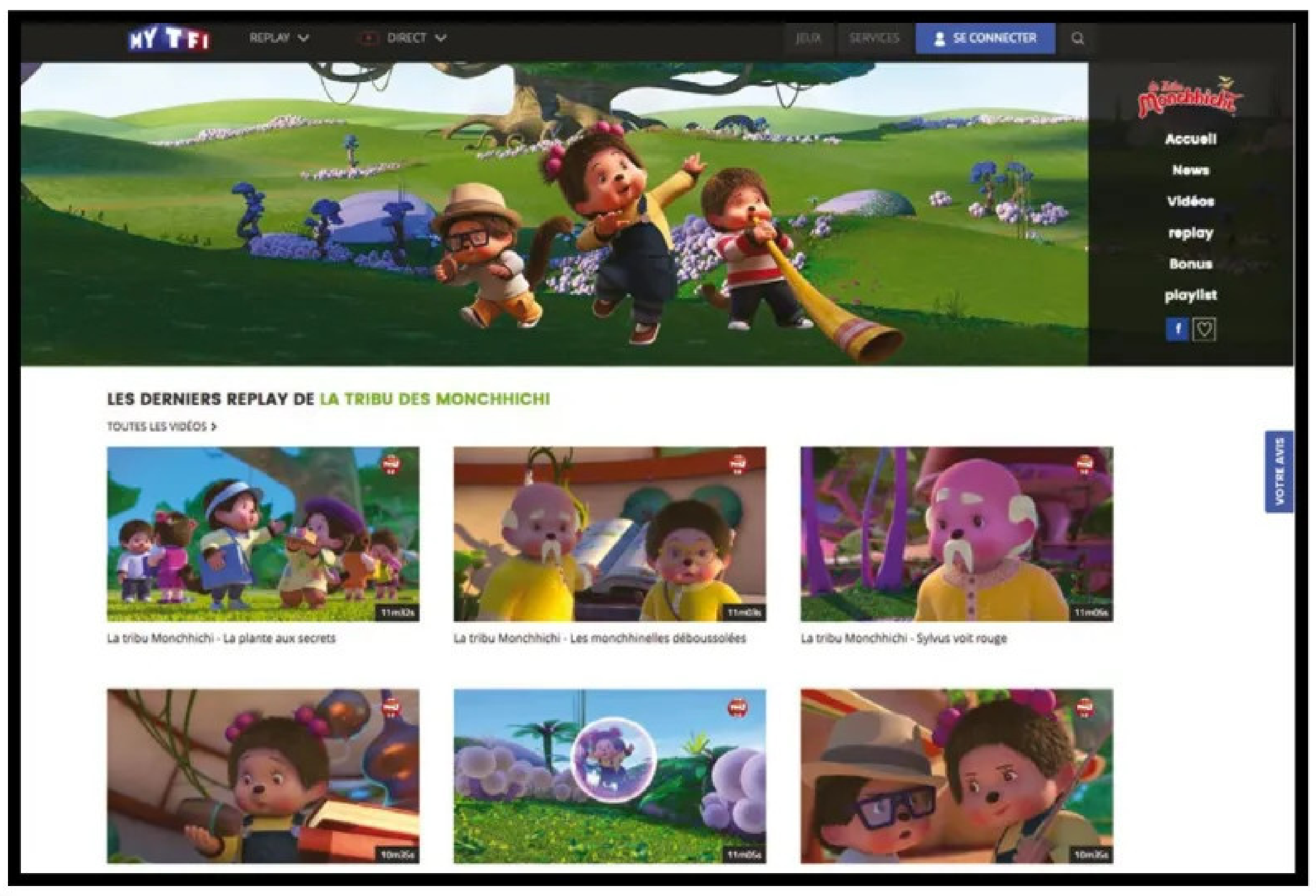

MY TF1
LES DERNIERS REPLAY DE LA TRIBU DES MONCHHICHI

A new animated TV show, *La Tribu Monchhichi*, appeared in 2017, proving that there is still plenty of life left in the brand. Produced by Technicolor Animation Productions and French TV station TF1, the first season runs to 52 11-minute episodes.

Commenting on the longevity of the brand, which has now been going strong for more than 40 years, current Sekiguchi chairman Koichi Sekiguchi said: "Monchhichi is still delivering the same message of peace and love and will always be here to share his owner's joys and sorrows."

There have been 96 episodes of *Fraggle Rock*, spread over five seasons. The finale, on 30 March 1987, was surprisingly moving as it saw Doc and Sprocket move away from Fraggle Rock.

# FRAGGLE ROCK

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Jim Henson
**First released:** 1983

Nothing in the '80s offered the combination of thrilling creativity and daring imagination that was *Fraggle Rock*. A rollercoaster ride of eccentric characters, bizarre storylines and one of the most memorable worlds ever created, *Fraggle Rock* firmly lodged itself in the hearts and minds of any curious children tuning in for the first time.

*Fraggle Rock* was designed to grab your attention immediately, and that started with its musical opening number. The humming bass and joyful clapping combined for one of the most iconic theme tunes of the '80s, with its perfect opening line of 'dance your cares away, worries for another day'.

It was no happy accident. *Fraggle Rock* was created by Henson International Television, the production studio helmed by the legendary Jim Henson of *The Muppets* fame. It was no surprise to see his skill at creating a believable world with puppet characters shine through in *Fraggle Rock*, but the similarities ran deeper than that. Underneath the musical silliness and manic chatter, there was a serious message. The three groups of creatures who lived in Fraggle Rock – the Fraggles, the Doozers and the Gorgs – all depended on each other for survival. That gave Henson's team a broad canvas to write stories about identity, environmentalism and prejudice. But while those adult themes streaked through the unpredictable ride that was *Fraggle Rock*, it was the wilder elements that stayed with viewers. Whether it was Marjory the talking trash heap or outer space being accessible through a small hole in Doc's workshop, everyone had their own special memory of *Fraggle Rock*.

Doozers love to build structures with Doozer Sticks, which are made of radish dust. They don't have time to play games or mess around because they're so busy building. They don't mind the Fraggles eating their structures because without that, the Doozers would run out of space to build.

The fun-loving residents of Fraggle Rock, the Fraggles enjoying causing mischief and having a great time. They don't get on with the Doozers but they're often having too much fun to care, only slowing down when their favourite food – radishes – are in sight.

Though the network is more famous now for critically acclaimed dramas including *Game Of Thrones*, *The Sopranos* and *The Wire*, it was *Fraggle Rock* that marked HBO's first foray into original programming. Who knows where we'd be without it.

Fraggle Rock is, unsurprisingly, a rock. It lies in the Gorgs' Garden and they worship the rock, although they consider the Fraggles themselves to be a nuisance. The rock leads underground where the Doozers can be found building all day.

## THE LEGACY

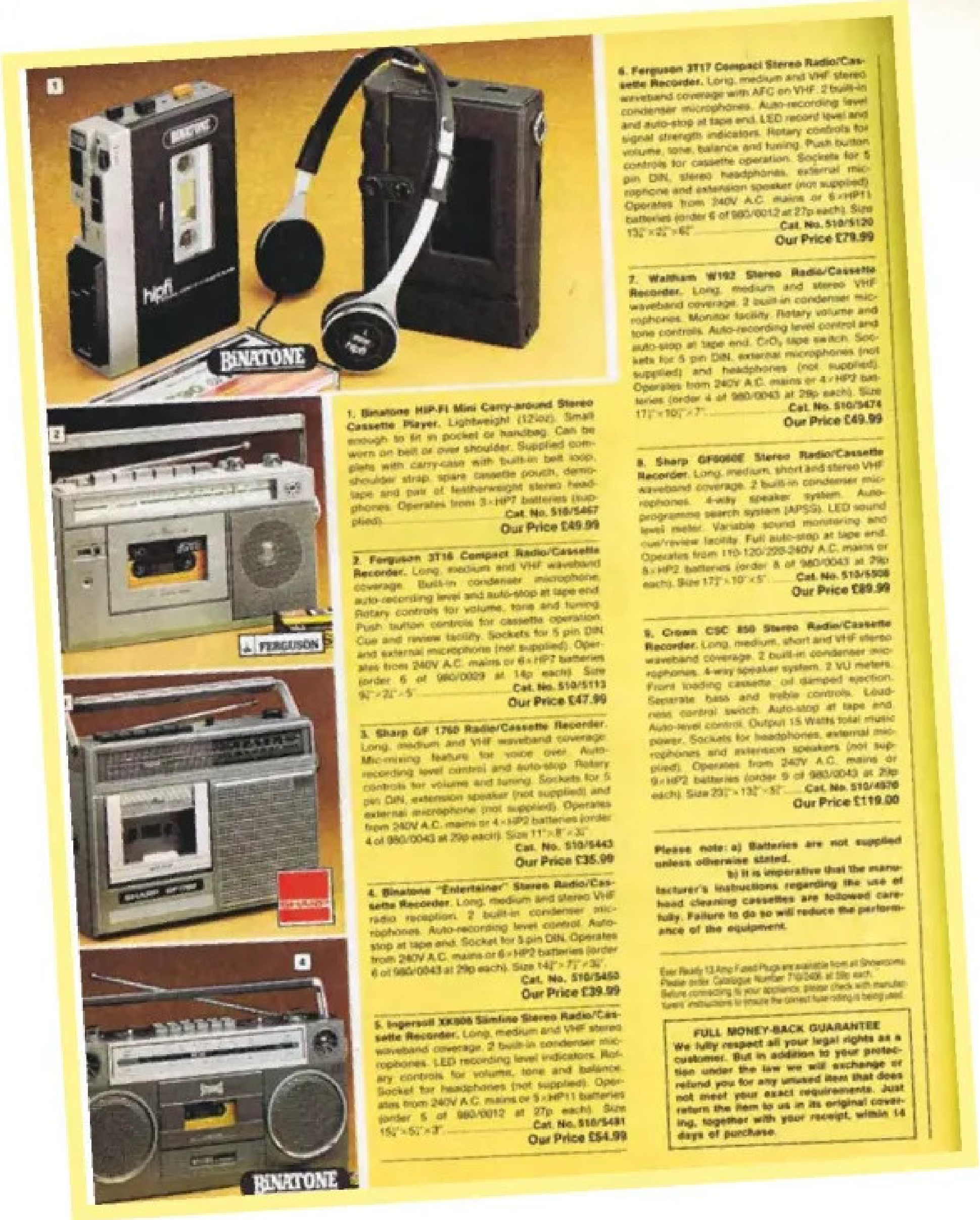
Although *Fraggle Rock* doesn't have any modern equivalent nowadays, it doesn't need one. The series has been made available on DVD, Blu-ray and streaming sites as well, testament to its enduring popularity. Meanwhile, the late Jim Henson's legacy lives on through The Muppets, with *Muppets Most Wanted* being the most recent movie featuring his famous puppet characters.

The TCS-300 added the ability to record as well as play songs, further revolutionising the portable music market. The original devices typically sold for around $150.

SONY
STEREO CASSETTE-CORDER
STEREO
SONY
STEREO
CASSETTE-CORDER
TCS-300
HEADPHONES
A
B
MIC
TONE
L VOL R
R
L
PAUSE
REC
BAT
PRE-END
ALARM
STOP
EJECT
STEREO

This original model had a big button just above the Sony logo, which you could press to temporarily muffle the sound from the cassette, allowing you to chat to a friend. The casing was also made from metal for protection given it was made to be taken outdoors, although it added extra weight.

SONY
STEREO CASSETTE PLAYER TPS-L2
OPERATION
HEADPHONES
A
B
STEREO
MIC
STOP
EJECT
VOLUME
SONY


BINATONE
FERGUSON
BINATONE

**1. Binatone HiFi Mini Carry-around Stereo Cassette Player.** Lightweight (12½oz). Small enough to fit in pocket or handbag. Can be worn on belt or over shoulder. Supplied complete with carry-case with built-in belt loop, shoulder strap, spare cassette pouch, demo-tape and pair of featherweight stereo headphones. Operates from 3×HP7 batteries (supplied). Cat. No. 510/5467 **Our Price £49.99**

**2. Ferguson 3T16 Compact Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium and VHF waveband coverage. Built-in condenser microphone, auto-recording level and auto-stop at tape end. Rotary controls for volume, tone and tuning. Push button controls for cassette operation. Cue and review facility. Sockets for 5 pin DIN and external microphone (not supplied). Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 6×HP7 batteries (order 6 of 980/0029 at 14p each). Size 9½"×2½"×5". Cat. No. 510/5113 **Our Price £47.99**

**3. Sharp GF 1760 Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium and VHF waveband coverage. Mic-mixing feature for voice over. Auto-recording level control and auto-stop. Rotary controls for volume and tuning. Sockets for 5 pin DIN, extension speaker (not supplied) and external microphone (not supplied). Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 4×HP2 batteries (order 4 of 980/0043 at 29p each). Size 11"×8"×3". Cat. No. 510/5443 **Our Price £35.99**

**4. Binatone "Entertainer" Stereo Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium and stereo VHF radio reception. 2 built-in condenser microphones. Auto-recording level control. Auto-stop at tape end. Socket for 5 pin DIN. Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 6×HP2 batteries (order 6 of 980/0043 at 29p each). Size 14¾"×7½"×3½". Cat. No. 510/5450 **Our Price £39.99**

**5. Ingersoll XK905 Slimline Stereo Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium and VHF stereo waveband coverage. 2 built-in condenser microphones. LED recording level indicators. Rotary controls for volume, tone and balance. Socket for headphones (not supplied). Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 5×HP11 batteries (order 5 of 980/0012 at 27p each). Size 15½"×5½"×3". Cat. No. 510/5481 **Our Price £54.99**

**6. Ferguson 3T17 Compact Stereo Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium and VHF stereo waveband coverage with AFC on VHF. 2 built-in condenser microphones. Auto-recording level and auto-stop at tape end. LED record level and signal strength indicators. Rotary controls for volume, tone, balance and tuning. Push button controls for cassette operation. Sockets for 5 pin DIN, stereo headphones, external microphone and extension speaker (not supplied). Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 6×HP11 batteries (order 6 of 980/0012 at 27p each). Size 13½"×2½"×6½". Cat. No. 510/5120 **Our Price £79.99**

**7. Waltham W192 Stereo Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium and stereo VHF waveband coverage. 2 built-in condenser microphones. Monitor facility. Rotary volume and tone controls. Auto-recording level control and auto-stop at tape end. CrO2 tape switch. Sockets for 5 pin DIN, external microphones (not supplied) and headphones (not supplied). Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 4×HP2 batteries (order 4 of 980/0043 at 29p each). Size 17½"×10"×7". Cat. No. 510/5474 **Our Price £49.99**

**8. Sharp GF8080E Stereo Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium, short and stereo VHF waveband coverage. 2 built-in condenser microphones. 4-way speaker system. Auto-programme search system (APSS). LED sound level meter. Variable sound monitoring and cue/review facility. Full auto-stop at tape end. Operates from 110-120/220-240V A.C. mains or 8×HP2 batteries (order 8 of 980/0043 at 29p each). Size 17½"×10"×5". Cat. No. 510/5508 **Our Price £89.99**

**9. Crown CSC 850 Stereo Radio/Cassette Recorder.** Long, medium, short and VHF stereo waveband coverage. 2 built-in condenser microphones. 4-way speaker system. 2 VU meters. Front loading cassette, oil damped ejection. Separate bass and treble controls. Loudness control switch. Auto-stop at tape end. Auto-level control. Output 15 Watts total music power. Sockets for headphones, external microphones and extension speakers (not supplied). Operates from 240V A.C. mains or 9×HP2 batteries (order 9 of 980/0043 at 29p each). Size 23½"×13½"×5½". Cat. No. 510/4970 **Our Price £119.00**

**Please note: a) Batteries are not supplied unless otherwise stated.**
**b) It is imperative that the manufacturer's instructions regarding the use of head cleaning cassettes are followed carefully. Failure to do so will reduce the performance of the equipment.**

Ever Ready 13 Amp Fused Plugs are available from all Showrooms. Please order Catalogue Number 710/0408 at 39p each. Before connecting to your appliance please check with manufacturers' instructions to ensure the correct fuse rating is being used.

**FULL MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE**
**We fully respect all your legal rights as a customer. But in addition to your protection under the law we will exchange or refund you for any unused item that does not meet your exact requirements. Just return the item to us in its original covering, together with your receipt, within 14 days of purchase.**

It was not long before other companies began to make their own portable players, as this Argos catalogue entry of a Binatone model (top) shows. Advertised in 1981, it cost £49.99 and came with the headphones and three supplied batteries as well as a built-in belt loop, shoulder strap and demo tape.

The debut TPS-L2 was short on controls, limiting users to just play, pause, eject and volume but that proved to be more than enough for most people. Indeed, the majority of users were simply overawed by the 15mW output of this portable player, so greater complexity was largely unnecessary.

# WALKMAN

Forget your vinyl revival. At the turn of the '80s, the most convenient and coolest way to listen to your tunes was by slapping a cassette into Sony's revolutionary portable player before popping on some headphones and grooving on the go.

Coming long before Apple introduced the iPhone, the beautifully named Walkman did away with tethered power sources. And while it was chunky and needed to be robustly clipped to a belt, so long as the batteries were not dying a death, it did a fine job of playing your lovingly made mixtapes and shop-bought albums.

Sure, it may have chewed some of them up, but it was a small price to pay for the convenience and privacy. Indeed, Masaru Ibuka, Sony's co-founder, wanted it to be as affordable and small as possible, and this was achieved by modifying the compact Sony Pressman tape recorder using low-end components, a playback head and an amplifier.

The result was a global phenomenon, hugely popular with teenagers of the '80s. First off the line was the TPS-L2 model encased in blue-and-silver metal, which debuted in the United States as the SoundAbout in 1980. When it arrived in the UK, it boasted two mini-headphone jacks for more social listening. Within ten years of its release, 50 million units had been sold, and soon more stylish versions arrived. In 1983, a splash-resistant model with a built-in radio was released.

Following that was the WM-101, which used rechargeable batteries, while the iconic Yellow Monster, introduced in 1988, boasted a snazzy case and solar alarm clock. One thing's for sure, they were preferable to hulking a boombox on your shoulder – another great trend of the '80s.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Sony
**First released:** 1979
**Expect to pay:** £220/$240

### THE LEGACY

The word 'Walkman' entered our language as a generic term for all portable players, and the concept has evolved over the years. Advances such as Dolby C noise reduction in 1984 gave way to entirely different media with the first CD-based Discman in 1984, a Video Walkman in 1989 and versions that embraced MiniDiscs and MP3s. Sony continues to use the Walkman brand today, having revived it for music-centred mobile phones. Apple's iPod caused users to switch attention, however, and now that company (and Android) has most of the portable music market.

SONY
Sony
Walkman
Digital Music Player

# HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

**It began life as a potential rival to G.I. Joe, and became a global phenomenon thanks to a cartoon based on the adventures of its titular star. Find out more about the most powerful toys in the universe – we have the power!**

While many remember the cartoon most fondly, it was with a successful range of action figures that He-Man and his realm were first unleashed upon the world.

Having passed on the opportunity to create toys based upon a small science-fiction adventure called Star Wars, Mattel's thoughts turned to how it could introduce a new range to compete with Kenner (Star Wars) and Hasbro (G.I. Joe). Mattel already had the female market cornered thanks to Barbie – what about the young boys' market too? It was an ongoing theme at the firm, which had already tried and failed to battle the all-conquering G.I. Joe with Big Jim, a clean-cut sports hero.

Like Joe and Jim, male action figures were traditionally lean and toned rather than ultra-powerful and muscular. Then, in the summer of 1980, when Mattel acquired the rights to the imminent Arnold Schwarzenegger movie Conan the Barbarian, Mattel designer Roger Sweet had a light-bulb moment. The movie option was quickly dropped due its violence, but combined with his discovery of the amazing art of Frank Frazetta, Sweet was inspired to devise the succinct tag line 'barbarian monster fantasy' for a potential series of action figures. The designer set to work making the test models, including the idea of additional armour and other accessories, a pivoting waist and an oversized, hyper-muscular body. Three

different figures were readied for display to the Mattel marketing team: a space warrior, contemporary soldier and the barbarian, all boasting the exaggerated Schwarzenegger-esque physique and a slightly crouched, ready-for-battle pose. The final piece was the name. In a flash of inspiration, Roger Sweet came up with the perfect punchy blend of machismo and raw sinewy power: He-Man.

The day of the big pitch involved several proposals from Sweet's rivals in the design department. Front and centre at the meeting was Mattel president Ray Wagner, who had turned down Star Wars several years earlier. After Sweet made his pitch, Wagner pointed at the He-Man figures and uttered the immortal – and possibly apocryphal – line: "Those have the power." He-Man was go.

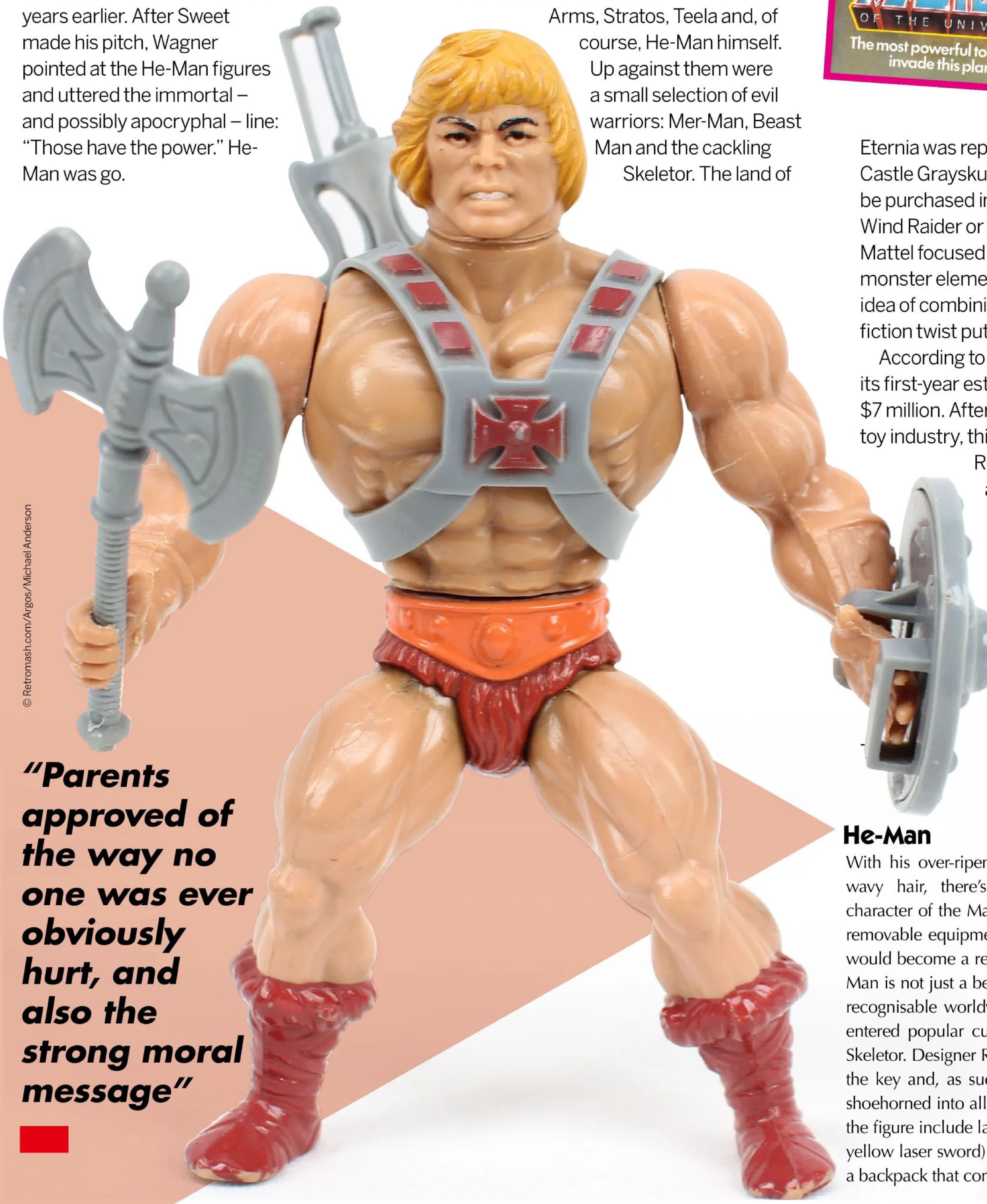
## GOING GLOBAL

Having had the nod from Mattel's bigwigs, Sweet and his colleagues began designing the starter set and accompanying figures that would form the debut line of releases of the Masters of the Universe. Despite the go-ahead, it was still a big risk for the toy company: He-Man was an unlicensed, unknown property that would hit the market with no instant brand recognition.

1982 was the year which finally saw the over-muscled hero and his ilk revealed to the world. Included in this first wave were heroic characters such as Man-At-Arms, Stratos, Teela and, of course, He-Man himself. Up against them were a small selection of evil warriors: Mer-Man, Beast Man and the cackling Skeletor. The land of Eternia was represented by the main playset, Castle Grayskull itself, while He-Man could be purchased in a gift set alongside his flying Wind Raider or the powerful Battle Cat. Mattel focused this first year on the barbarian monster element of He-Man, with its creator's idea of combining this theme with a science-fiction twist put on hold.

According to Sweet, Mattel marketing put its first-year estimate for He-Man at around $7 million. After favourable reaction from the toy industry, this figure was hastily revised. Respectable sales figures of almost $40 million in the Masters of the Universe's debut year were enough to propel it into further production. After doubling that amount a year later, and then topping $100 million in 1984, He-Man became a hit both domestically and worldwide. reason was undoubtedly the

MASTERS
OF THE UNIVERSE
The most powerful toys ever to invade this planet.

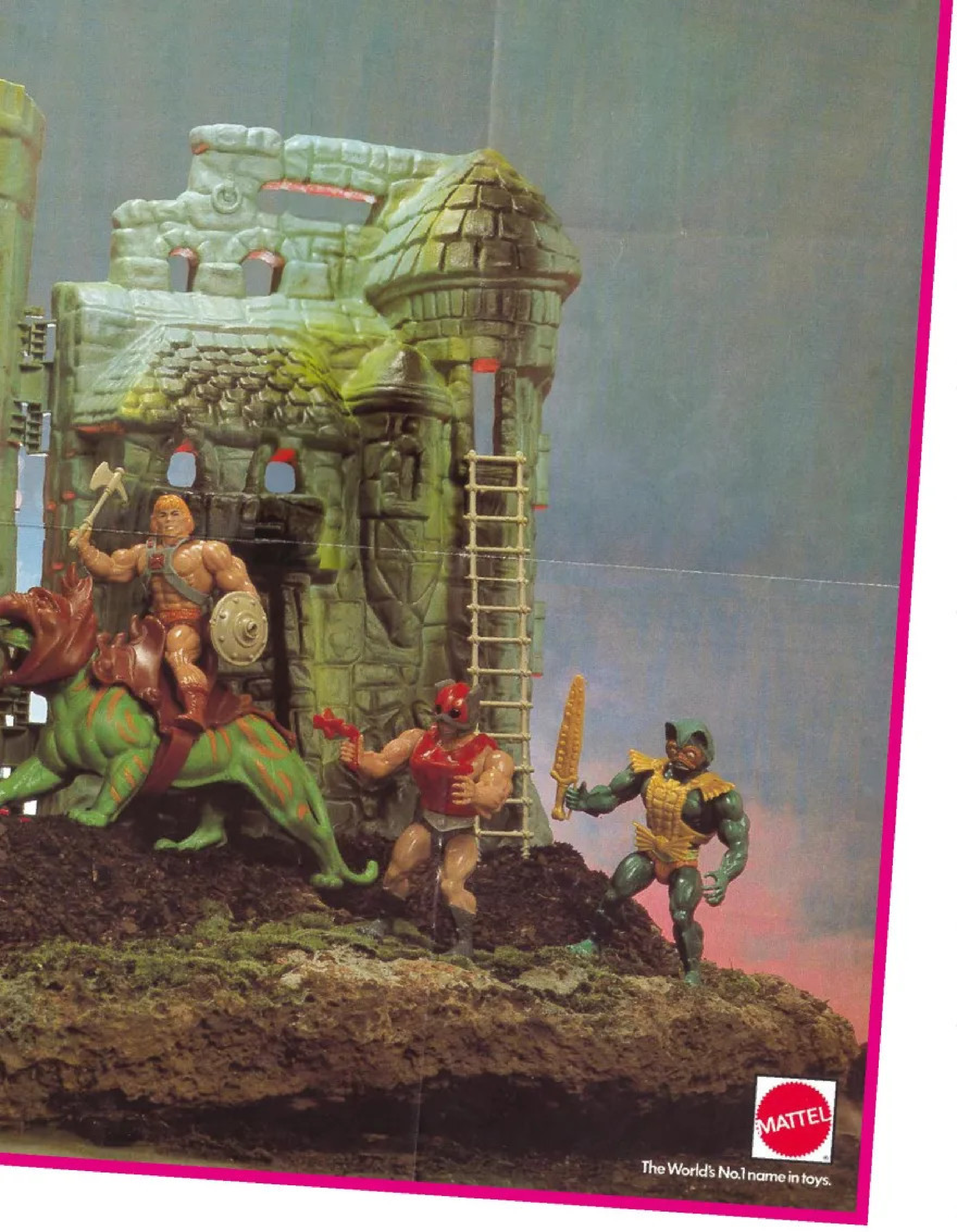


© Retromash.com/Argos/Michael Anderson

***"Parents approved of the way no one was ever obviously hurt, and also the strong moral message"***

**He-Man**

With his over-ripened muscles and shock of blond, wavy hair, there's no mistaking the heroic lead character of the Masters of the Universe. Sporting the removable equipment and spring-loaded waist which would become a recurring feature of the toy-line, He-Man is not just a beefcake figure, but also an instantly recognisable worldwide phenomenon that has firmly entered popular culture, along with his arch-enemy, Skeletor. Designer Roger Sweet realised simplicity was the key and, as such, He-Man and his kin could be shoehorned into all manner of styles. Later versions of the figure include laser power He-Man (complete with yellow laser sword) and Thunder Punch He-Man, with a backpack that contains a slot for a blasting cap.



**Castle Grayskull**

The first and most iconic playset of the MOTU toy-line, Castle Grayskull was a must for any kid wanting to re-create the battles of the cartoon. It includes a trap door, laser cannon and elevator, and promises hours of fun once coupled with figures, available separately. See also the Snake Mountain and Towers Of Eternia playsets.

cartoon adaptation, entitled *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*.

Not long after the toy-line had been released, Mattel penned a deal with animation company Filmation to create a cartoon based around He-Man. The result would distort the edge between children's entertainment and advertising; the programme essentially served as a 30-minute commercial for Mattel's products. And it did its job admirably too, shooting He-Man into the public consciousness, and making it the must-have toy around the world. The show's popularity with parents was a key factor: they usually approved of the way no one was ever obviously hurt, and also the strong moral message conveyed by one of the good characters at the conclusion of each episode. This no doubt aided He-Man when it came to birthday and Christmas present buying.

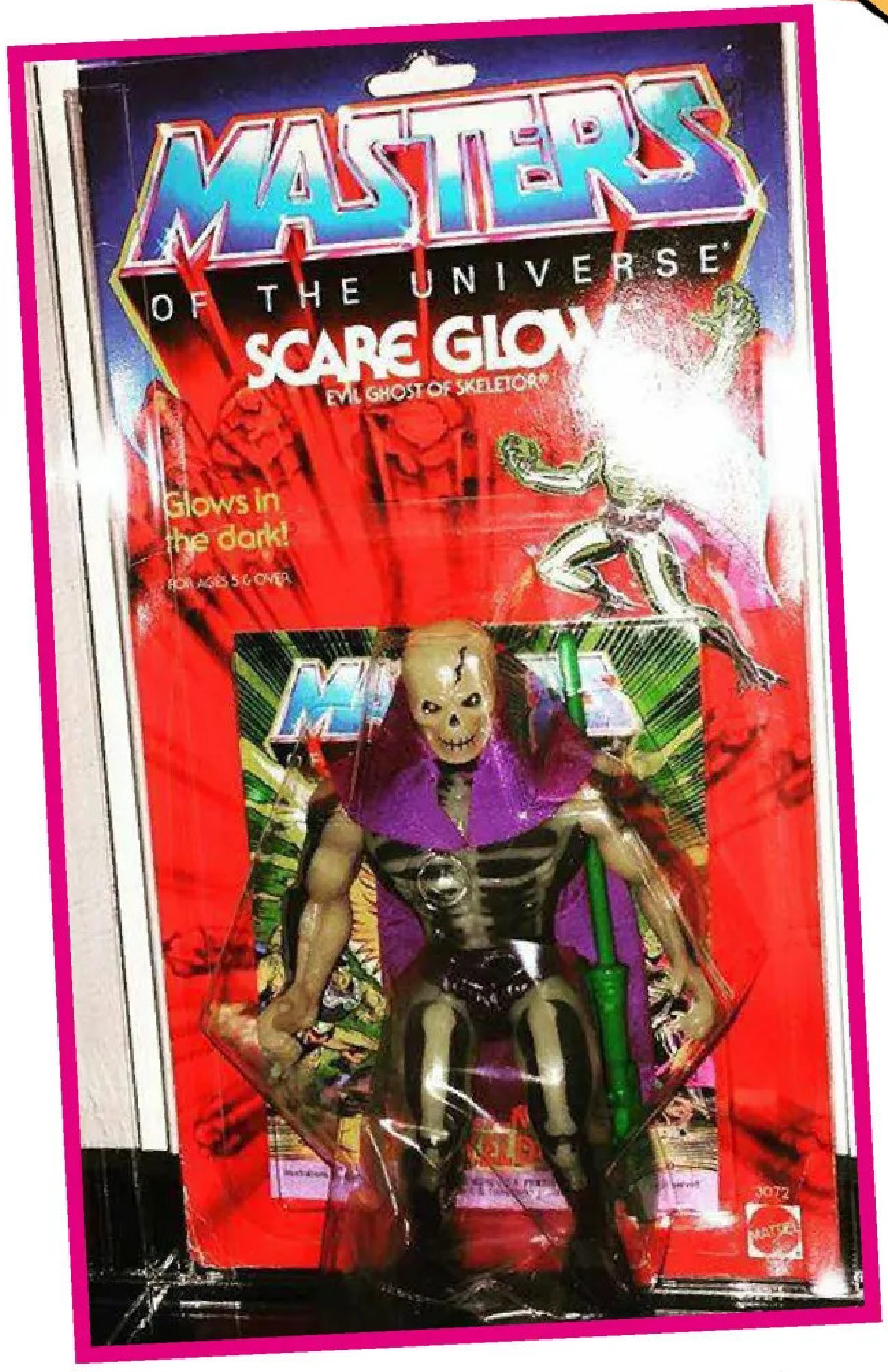
## COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

*Masters of the Universe* is one of those rare examples of a children's show and toy that breached its original target audience and conquered the general public consciousness. Propelled by the moralising cartoon that mixed a stirring theme tune with a memorable tagline that could easily be repeated in school playgrounds around the world, the fame of He-Man long outlived the original Mattel toy-line which peaked in popularity around 1986. Despite attempts to revive the toy since, recent waves have been aimed firmly at nostalgic collectors, such as the 2000 commemorative reissue of the original line, together with analogous back cards. Looking back at He-Man's origins, it's clear much of this remarkable artwork on the Masters of the Universe boxes and cards owes a significant debt to the work of genius fantasy artist Frank Frazetta, and of course, that ancient barbarian hero, Conan. And like these works, the timeless nature of these themes has ensured the appeal of He-Man has not meaningfully dwindled over the past 30 years.

Today, the appeal of collecting He-Man and MOTU merchandising comes from several different sources. Simple nostalgia is a major factor, as many collectors try to recapture their childhood through the toys they played with 30 years ago. The figures and playsets are also either iconic (such as He-Man himself and the villainous Skeletor), or inventive, whether it be the multifaceted Man-E-Faces, the glow-in-the-dark Scare Glow or the spring-loaded human battering ram, Ram Man. Other factors include the sheer wealth and variety of figures, and the unusual blend of the primitive, magical barbarian theme with the sci-fi overtones of latter waves, a trick Mattel would try to repeat with the rather less successful cowboy/sci-fi mash-up, Bravestarr. Finally, like many retro toys, collectors buy for investment, and in this context, condition is key. Wave one figures and playsets, if in good order and boxed, can fetch sky-high prices on auction sites.

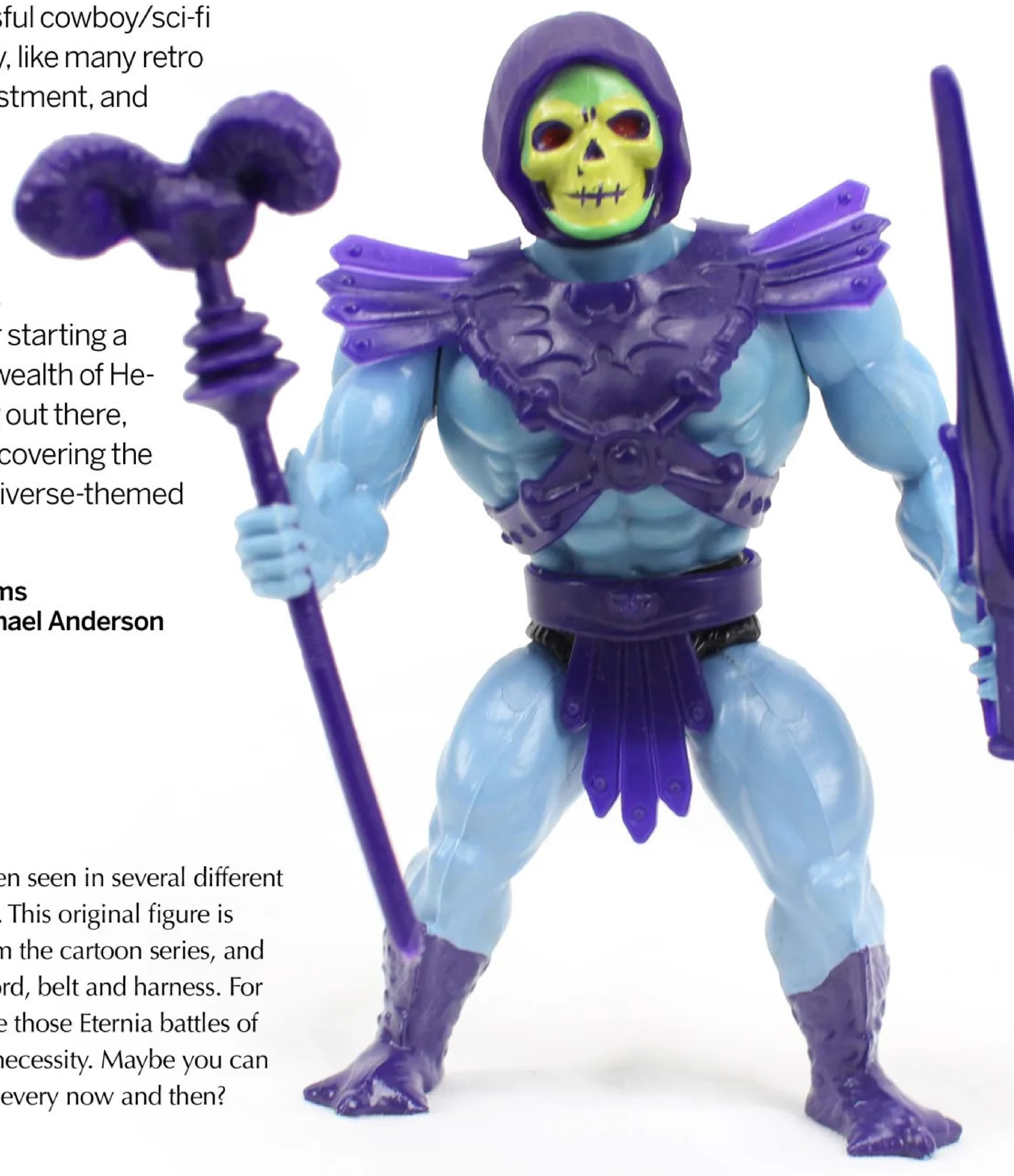
Whatever your reason for starting a MOTU collection, there's a wealth of He-Man related merchandising out there, just waiting for you. And discovering the variety of Masters of the Universe-themed items is all part of the fun.

**Special thanks to Matt Williams (@matt_williams86) and Michael Anderson (@motumatters) for images.**



**Scare Glow**

A malevolent spirit summoned by Skeletor, reanimated as a ghostly, glow-in-the-dark figure complete with a verdant halberd (named his Scythe Of Doom) and removable cape. Due to its devilish appearance, Scare Glow is a favourite character of many fans, and one of the more unusual and imaginative MOTU figures to collect.



**Skeletor**

He-Man's nemesis has been seen in several different guises since the first wave. This original figure is the most recognisable from the cartoon series, and includes a battle staff, sword, belt and harness. For anyone looking to emulate those Eternia battles of old, a Skeletor figure is a necessity. Maybe you can even – gulp – let him win every now and then?

# TEDDY RUXPIN

As a parent, imagine if there was a toy that somehow combined cooking with the children playing football, or vacuuming with hide and seek. That was the unique appeal of Teddy Ruxpin, one of the most popular toys in the '80s. Not only was it a brilliant toy, it also gave mums and dads the chance to relax, as it combined fun with parent duty.

The idea was simple enough. Teddy Ruxpin was a cute teddy bear with a cassette deck built into his back. Different Teddy Ruxpin cassettes contained different stories about Teddy and his adventures with his best friends Grubby and Newton Gimmick. Load him up with a cassette and Teddy Ruxpin would move his eyes and mouth in sync with the story as it was read out loud.

From the children's point of view, they didn't see a toy that gave parents the night off. They just saw a cuddly and adorable teddy bear, reading them imaginative stories about chasing treasure and keeping them company. With its dual appeal to both parents and children, Teddy Ruxpin became the bestselling toy of both 1985 and 1986.

But moving parts weren't the only way Teddy Ruxpin came to life. The teddy bear took centre stage in his own cartoon, *The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin*, which used the same stories and voice actors from the cassettes. It proved every bit as popular as the actual Teddy Ruxpin doll – mention his name nowadays and you'll see just as many older eyes light up because of their memories of the cartoon.

Teddy Ruxpin

## Information

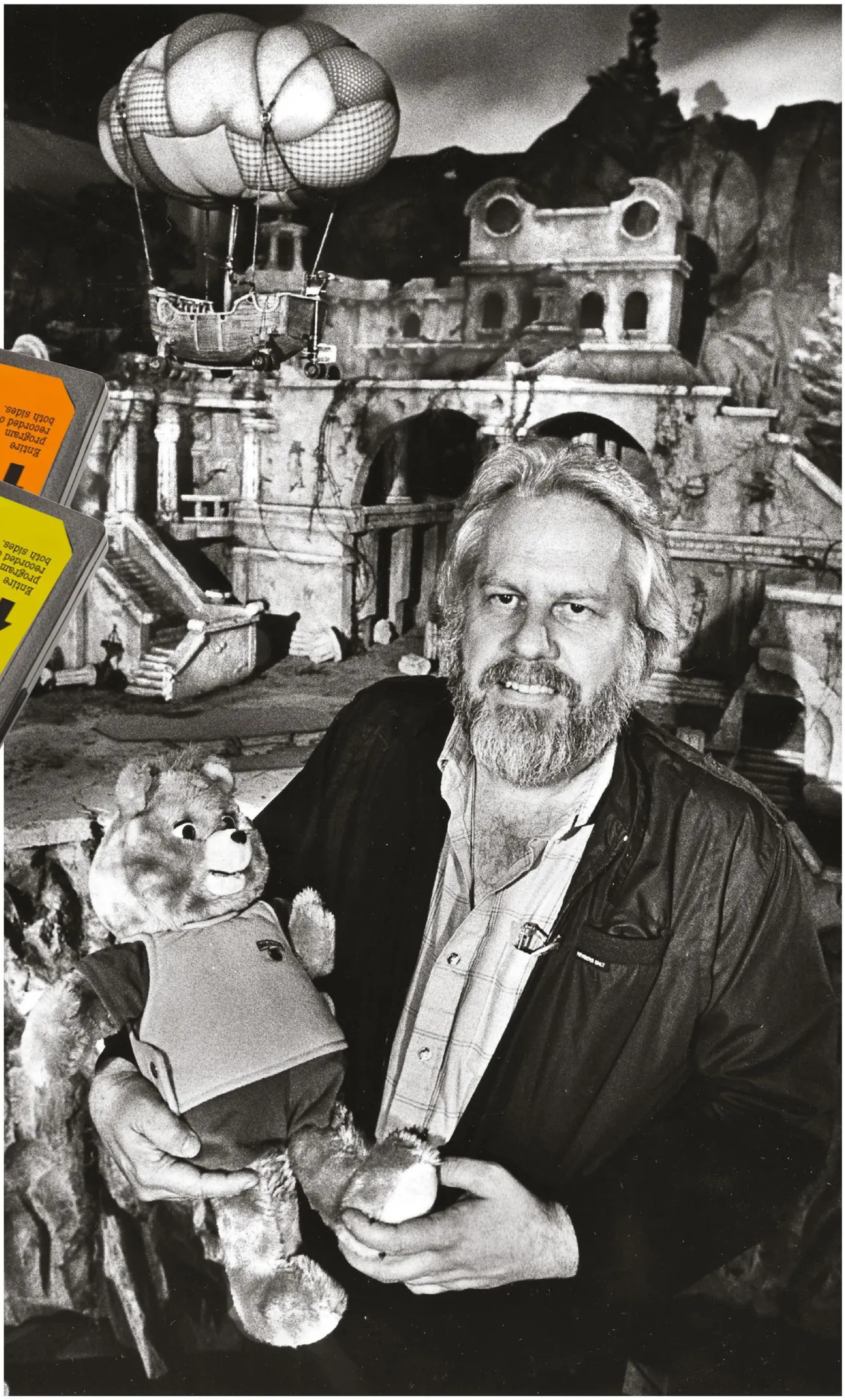
**Manufacturer:** Worlds of Wonder
**First released:** 1985
**Current manufacturer:** BackPack Toys
**Expect to pay:** £45 (Second-hand models only)

## THE LEGACY

Teddy Ruxpin has experienced mixed fortunes since its explosive debut in the '80s. Its original manufacturers, Worlds of Wonder, went bust in 1990, leading to a succession of companies trying to relaunch Teddy Ruxpin but failing to recreate its debut success. BackPack Toys will launch a new line of Teddy Ruxpin toys this year, with technology that puts the original to shame – the 2017 version has an internal hard drive, 40 facial expressions and an accompanying smartphone app.

The famous version of Teddy Ruxpin used a cassette for stories, which were loaded into the bear's back. But as technology progressed, the cassette was replaced with a digital cartridge.

Teddy Ruxpin
Teddy Ruxpin Lullabies
Entire program recorded on both sides.
Teddy Ruxpin
Teddy Ruxpin Lullabies
Entire program recorded on both sides.
100
50
0



At the height of Teddy Ruxpin's success, Worlds of Wonder developed a workout tape and book called *Teddy's Workout*. This saw children helping Teddy exercise by moving his arms and legs; however, because of liability and insurance issues, it was never released.

Unsurprisingly given the doll's popularity, there was briefly a market for unofficial Teddy Ruxpin cassette tapes. Worlds of Wonder were having none of it, however, and successful lawsuits put an end to the knock-off tapes.

# MASTER SYSTEM

## Sega may not compete in the home-console arena any more, but its Master System arguably played a significant role in introducing many gamers to the concept of the 'home arcade'

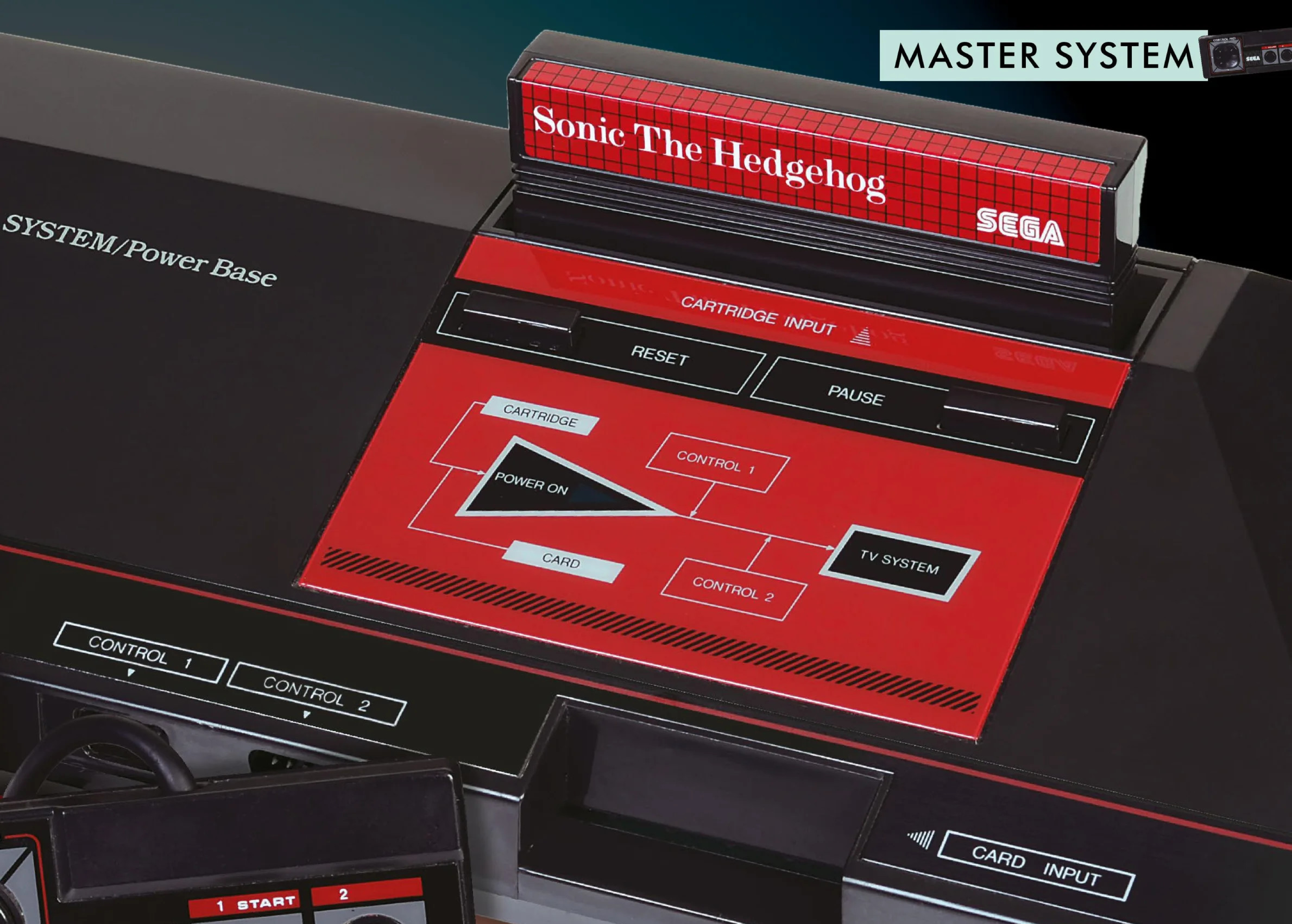
SEGA® MASTER
POWER
CONTROL PAD
1 START
2
SEGA
CONTROL PAD

The Sega Master System is something of an enigma. One of the most powerful home consoles of its time, the machine is barely worthy of a footnote when it comes to deconstructing the history of the American and Japanese gaming industries. It sank almost without trace in these two key territories, failing to make even a dent in the seemingly impregnable armour of Nintendo's NES (or Famicom). However, in other parts of the world – most notably Europe and South America – it was a tremendous success, winning hordes of fans and establishing Sega's reputation as a first-rate purveyor of arcade smash hits in the process.

Founded in 1940, Sega (an abbreviation of 'SErvice GAmes') initially gained renown for its unique brand of automated coin-operated arcade games. Having plenty of experience in the field of amusements, the company was perfectly poised to compete when 'true' arcade titles like *Pong* and *Space Invaders* started to appear. Thanks to successful games like *Future Spy* and *Zaxxon*, Sega soon garnered a reputation as something of an expert when it came to arcade thrills and spills.

As the '80s began to unfold, the videogame industry seemed unstoppable. Encouraged by the sterling performance of its coin-op division, and the sheer amount of money American company Atari seemed to be making from the VCS/2600, Sega decided to enter the home entertainment arena. Released in 1983, the SG-1000 was Sega's first attempt at cracking the console market. However, it was not the triumph the company had hoped for. To make matters significantly worse Atari managed to successfully flush the US home videogame market down the toilet in the same year, causing the first worldwide videogame crash. Sega's assets were hit badly in the ensuing fallout, but salvation came from American David Rosen (who had previous ties with Sega) and Japanese businessman Hayao Nakayama. These two men stopped the firm from collapsing into the gaping hole created by Atari's poor management.

After a period of stabilisation, Sega was purchased in 1984 by Japanese corporation CSK and subtly re-christened 'Sega Enterprises'. Despite the abject failure of the SG-1000, plans were made for a successor in the shape of the updated SG-1000 'Mark II'. Sega, like fellow Japanese company Nintendo, knew that although the crash of 1983 had damaged confidence in the videogame industry, it had created a void that simply begged to be filled – in Japan at least. The Mark II struggled to shift units at retail, but this hardware would eventually evolve into 1985's SG-1000 'Mark III' – bar a few technical differences this was the Master System in all but name. It was around this time that Sega's rivalry with Nintendo – which would later bloom into a full-scale war when the Mega Drive and SNES

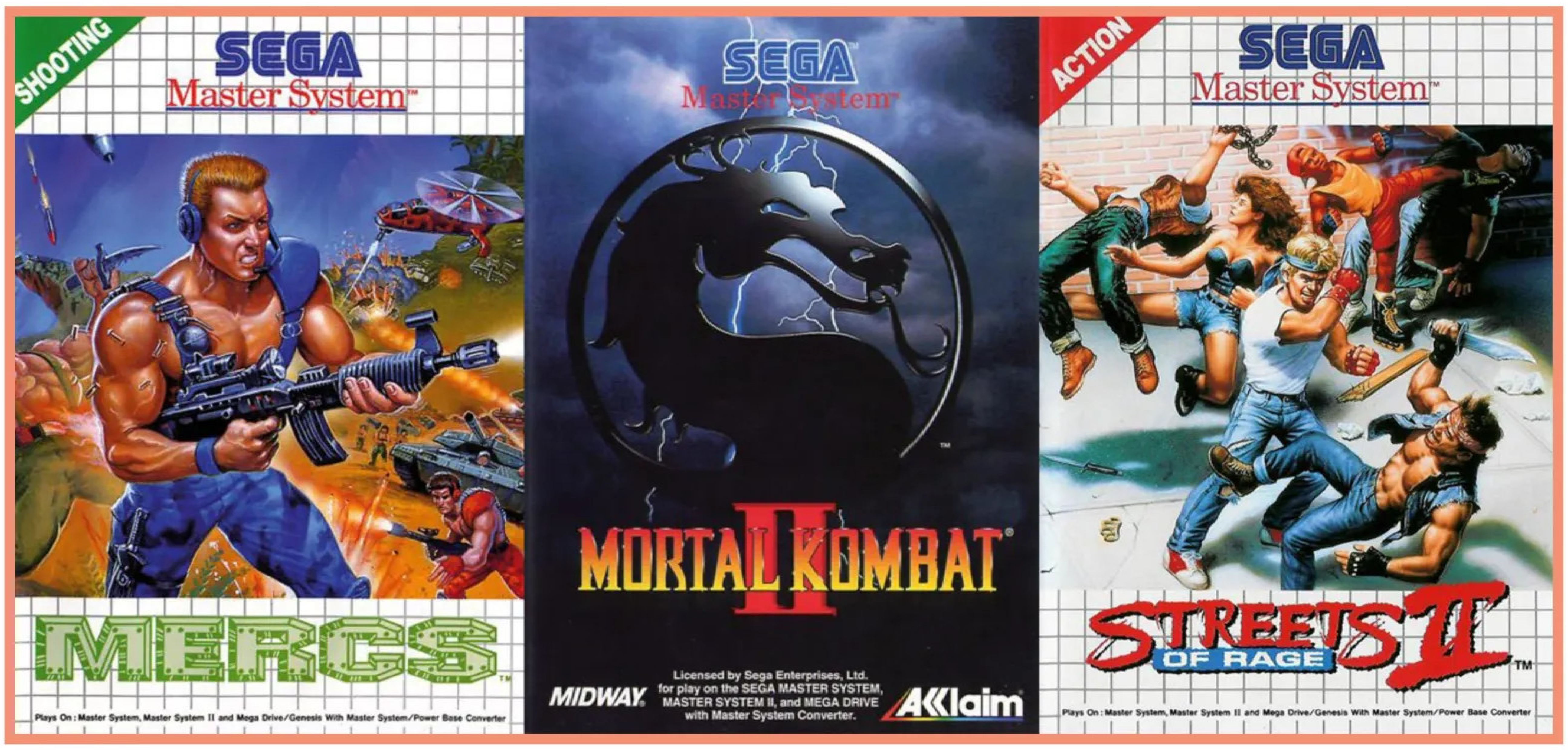

Sonic The Hedgehog
SEGA
SYSTEM/Power Base
CARTRIDGE INPUT
RESET
PAUSE
CARTRIDGE
POWER ON
CONTROL 1
CARD
CONTROL 2
TV SYSTEM
CONTROL 1
CONTROL 2
CARD INPUT
1 START
2
SEGA

## Information

**Year released:** Japan, 1985, UK: 1987
**Original price:** Japan: 16800 Yen, US: $200, UK: £99.99
**Expect to pay:** £20+

arrived on the scene – became apparent. Sega's machine was more powerful than Nintendo's, but when the Mark III and Famicom went head-to-head in Japan the former was given a rather humiliating beating by the latter. Nintendo's popular console trounced Sega's technically superior hardware thanks to a wealth of third-party support. Developers were infamously forced to agree that they would not publish their NES titles on rival hardware, which left Sega in a rather tight predicament – it could only rely on its own home-grown arcade titles for so long. The solution was to obtain the rights to 're-program' the games of other developers (a process that PC-Engine creator NEC also indulged in, ironically converting many of Sega's key arcade hits to its own 8-bit format), but even this strategy wasn't perfect – many of the licensed titles were distinctly lacklustre when compared to the 'cream of the crop' that the NES enjoyed.

Undeterred by the underwhelming performance of the Mark III on home soil, Sega decided to release the hardware in the US, where it was radically re-styled and rebranded as the impressive-sounding 'Master System'. Released in 1986 (a year after Nintendo performed the same trick with the Famicom, which became the big loveable slab of grey plastic known as



Towards the end of its life the Master System played host to some ambitious conversions – some far more successful than others.

the NES), the Master System found itself in a similar predicament to the one experienced in Japan. Nintendo had spent the previous year busily promoting its new console and had snapped up key developer support from Capcom, Konami and Taito. Again, Nintendo requested that developers keep their games 'NES exclusive', and given the unassailable position the console enjoyed, few had the will to defy this request. Despite possessing technically superior hardware, Sega had, unfortunately, come to the party too late, with the Master System also crippled by a meagre software library. Compared to the multitude of third-party developers that supported the NES, Sega was only able to call upon the allegiance of two in the US: Activision and Parker Brothers.

***"Any other company would have capitulated in the face of such a dismal performance, but Sega wasn't about to give up without a fight"***

By 1988, Sega's Japanese overlords had decided that enough was enough. Keen to offload the under-performing console, the questionable decision was made to sell the US distribution rights to toy firm Tonka. While the company was the indisputable king of the bright yellow plastic digger, it, sadly, had no experience whatsoever of effectively selling a cutting-edge electronic entertainment system. Tonka immediately made some puzzling choices regarding software choices and vetoed the localisation of several key titles (many of which were selling like hot cakes elsewhere in the world). Compared to the stunning collection of software available on the NES, the result was something of a foregone conclusion. Despite Tonka taking over the distribution duties, the Master System continued to perform poorly and was all but ignored by American gamers.

A rather pointless Japanese release of the Master System hardware followed in 1987, with the console being treated with the same level of disdain as its predecessor – unsurprising when you consider it was effectively the same machine that had been released to general apathy in 1985. It was eventually discontinued in Japan two years later. Any other company would have capitulated in the face of such a dismal performance, but Sega wasn't about to give up without a fight. Carefully scanning the globe for possible conquest, the stubby finger of fate fell on Europe – the one region where Nintendo's influence had yet to be felt. Nintendo had released the NES in Europe towards the end of 1986, but poor promotion coupled with a lofty price point meant that the market penetration enjoyed by the machine was decidedly unimpressive. Sega saw the opportunity and pounced. Ably distributed by UK company Mastertronic (previously famous for releasing budget games for the 8-bit home micros), the European variant of the Master System was unleashed in time for Christmas 1987. Spurred on by adverts that promoted the console as 'an arcade in the home', and supported by a range of killer coin-op classics such as *Hang On*, *OutRun*, *After Burner* and *Space Harrier*, the Master System quickly mopped up the market share Nintendo had been too slovenly to secure. Gamers weaned on the Spectrum and C64 suddenly saw the attraction of owning a home console – rather than playing bumbling, half-arsed conversions of their favourite arcade hits by Western companies only concerned with cashing in on popular titles, fans could indulge in highly accurate ports produced by Sega itself. "The Master System raised the bar in terms of arcade-style home gaming," explains Neil West, former editor of Sega Power magazine. "The hardware was a leap forward from the home computer systems we'd all been used to." It was with the Master System that many UK gamers experienced instantaneous loading – an astonishing revelation after years of waiting for tapes to load on the home computers.

Such was the success of the machine that Mastertronic soon found that the Master System was accounting for nearly

### GAME GEAR

Released to compete with the Game Boy, it was essentially a portable Master System. Many of the games were ports of home titles and the machine was even able to play Master System carts thanks to the 'Master Gear' converter. The Game Gear was battery hungry and suffered from a blurry screen – two factors that resulted in its downfall.

SEGA
GAME GEAR
START

its entire yearly turnover. Such spectacular performance attracted the attention of Richard Branson's Virgin, who eventually acquired the firm (which was renamed Virgin Mastertronic) and, therefore, the European distribution rights to Sega's hardware and software. It was a timely intervention and a shrewd business move as the Master System's successor was on the horizon and it would prove to be even more successful.

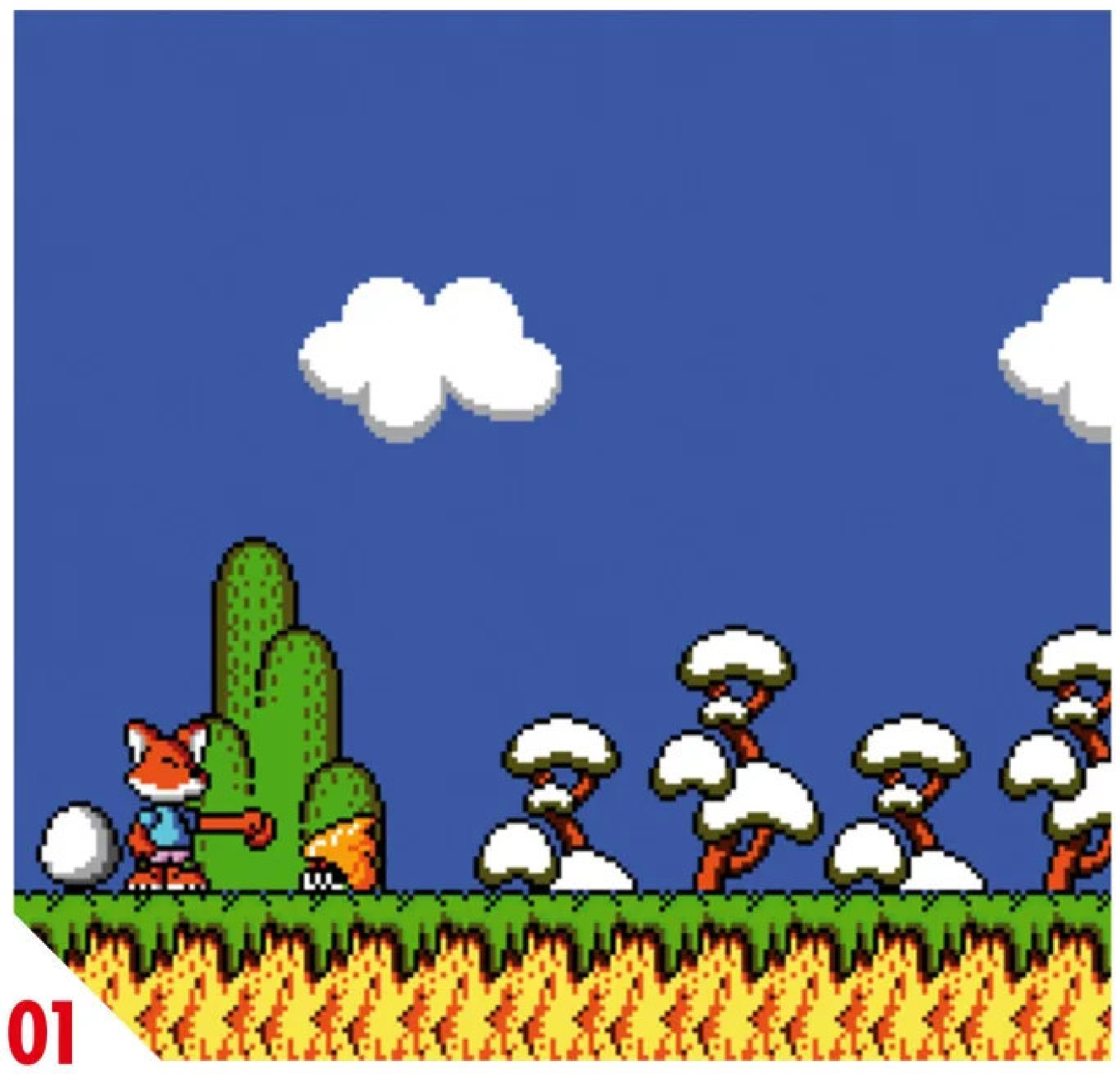
When the Mega Drive/Genesis was released, it spelt the end for the Master System in the US and Japan, despite a remodelled alternative appearing in the shape of the Master System II. Sega reacquired the US distribution rights for its products, from Tonka, and set about promoting the new-look Master System, possibly in the hope that the frenzied public interest in the 16-bit Genesis would somehow trickle down to its 8-bit stable mate. Sadly, it wasn't to be, and the final game to be published in the US was *Sonic The Hedgehog* in 1991. Compare this to Europe, where the Master System II was a big success and helped the format cling on to its significant market share. As the Mega Drive started to gather momentum, Sega Europe wisely kept the 8-bit console ticking over with a drip-feed of quality titles like *Streets Of Rage II*, *Mercs* and *Sonic 2*. Support finally died away in the mid-'90s Another market where the Master System enjoyed almost unchallenged success was Brazil. Traditionally a region where console technology trails that of the US, Europe and Japan, the machine was released in 1989, but remained wildly popular well into the following decade, marketed with impressive skill by Tec Toy. The company even went as far as to release a wireless variant of the Master System hardware, dubbed 'The Compact'. When you consider this rather sketchy history, which saw the Master System fail catastrophically in two of the three key worldwide markets, it begs the question: is the console really worthy of a reassessment? The answer is simple. Without this criminally undervalued machine, Sega would not have enjoyed the considerable success that it subsequently had with the Mega Drive. The Master System allowed Sega to experiment with arcade conversions, original IP and even create a mascot in the form of the loveable monkey-boy Alex Kidd. Without the Master System we also wouldn't have Phantasy Star – one of Sega's most well-known and best-loved franchises. Developers like Yuji Naka and Naoto Oshima cut their teeth on Sega's 8-bit hardware. Although it couldn't boast the sheer volume of classic titles possessed by Nintendo's NES, the Master System is still worthy of praise. Those gamers willing to stick with their machines back in the late-'80s were treated to a commendable selection of games including *Wonderboy III: The Dragon's Trap*, *Psycho Fox*, *Power Strike* (aka *Aleste*), *Golvellius*, *Phantasy Star* and many, many others.

The fact that Sega was so dominant in the coin-op arena also meant that the machine played host to some commendable ports, as Neil West reveals, "The console came at a time when Sega enjoyed huge influence and power in the coin-op world, which meant a lot of games were available for conversion." Although it could be argued that the promise of 'an arcade in the home' wasn't fulfilled until the advent of the Mega Drive, the Master System nevertheless created a solid foundation to build on and gave gamers an insight into the fascinating world of Sega. This was a company that in the proceeding years would scale the heights of the world videogame industry, only to fall from grace in spectacular fashion almost as rapidly. In that respect, the Master System serves as a remarkable historical piece – with this much-maligned console, Sega tentatively tested the waters it would ultimately flounder in.

OutRun
The Two-Mega Cartridge
SEGA
SONIC CHAOS
SONIC
SEGA MASTER SYSTEM II POWER BASE
JAMES POND 2 - CODENAME ROBOCOD
DEEP DUCK TROUBLE
INDIANA JONES and the Last Crusade
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2
CONTROL PAD

# PERFECT TEN GAMES

It was home to the ugliest game cartridges, was cased in the most god-awful package design that you could imagine, but boasted some cracking games nonetheless. Don't believe us? Then why not take a look at the ten Master System games that we can't possibly be without



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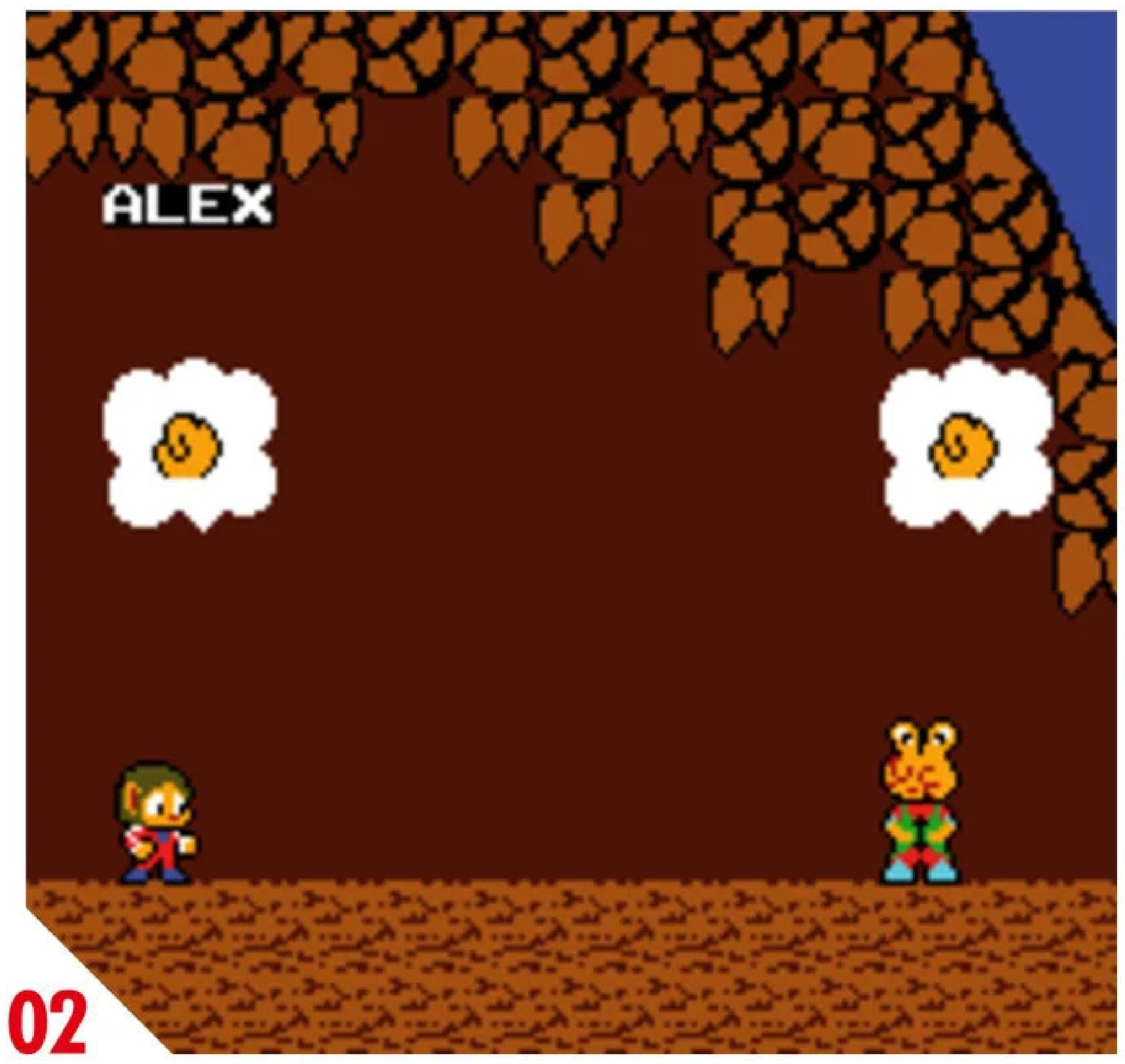

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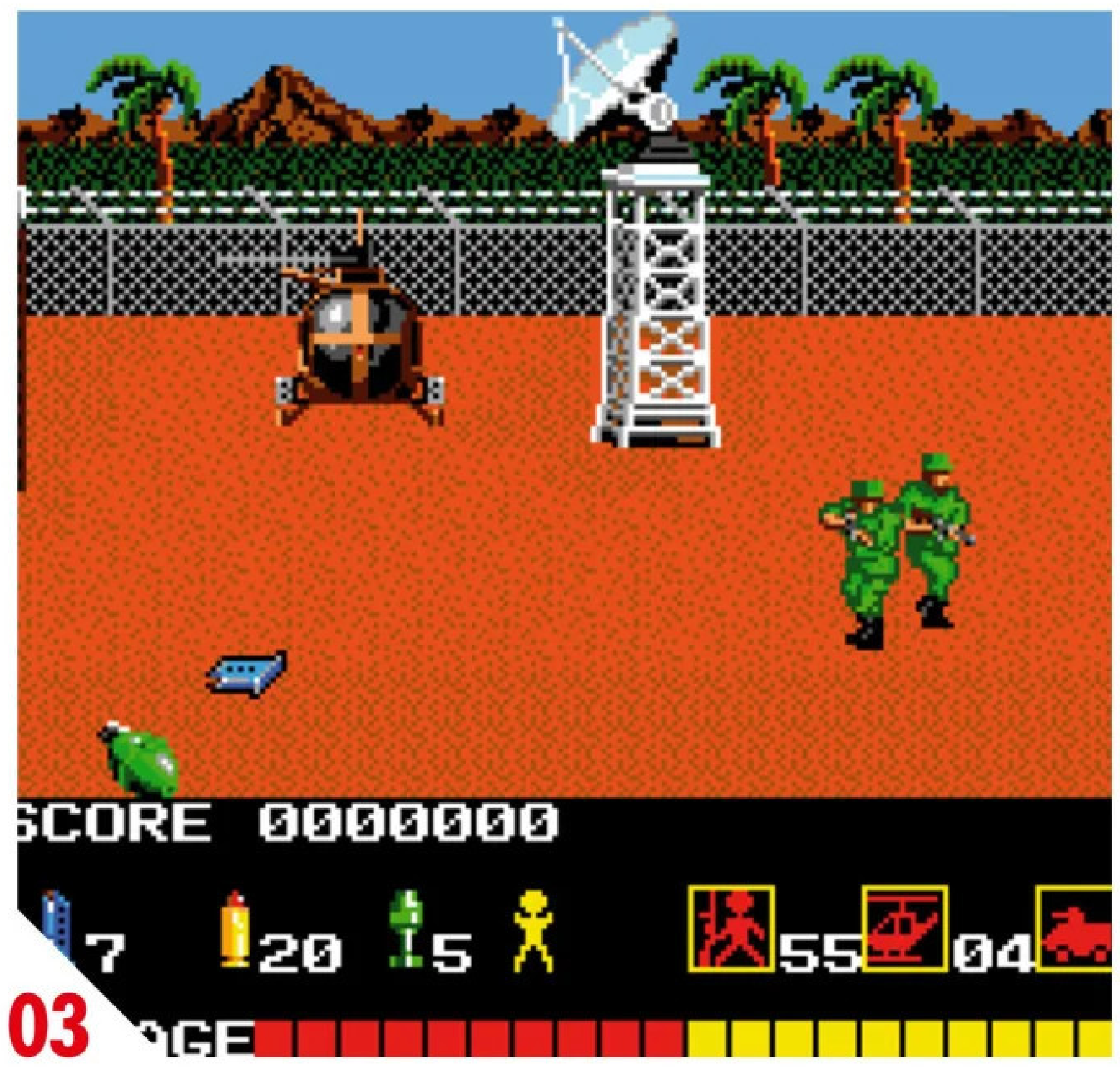

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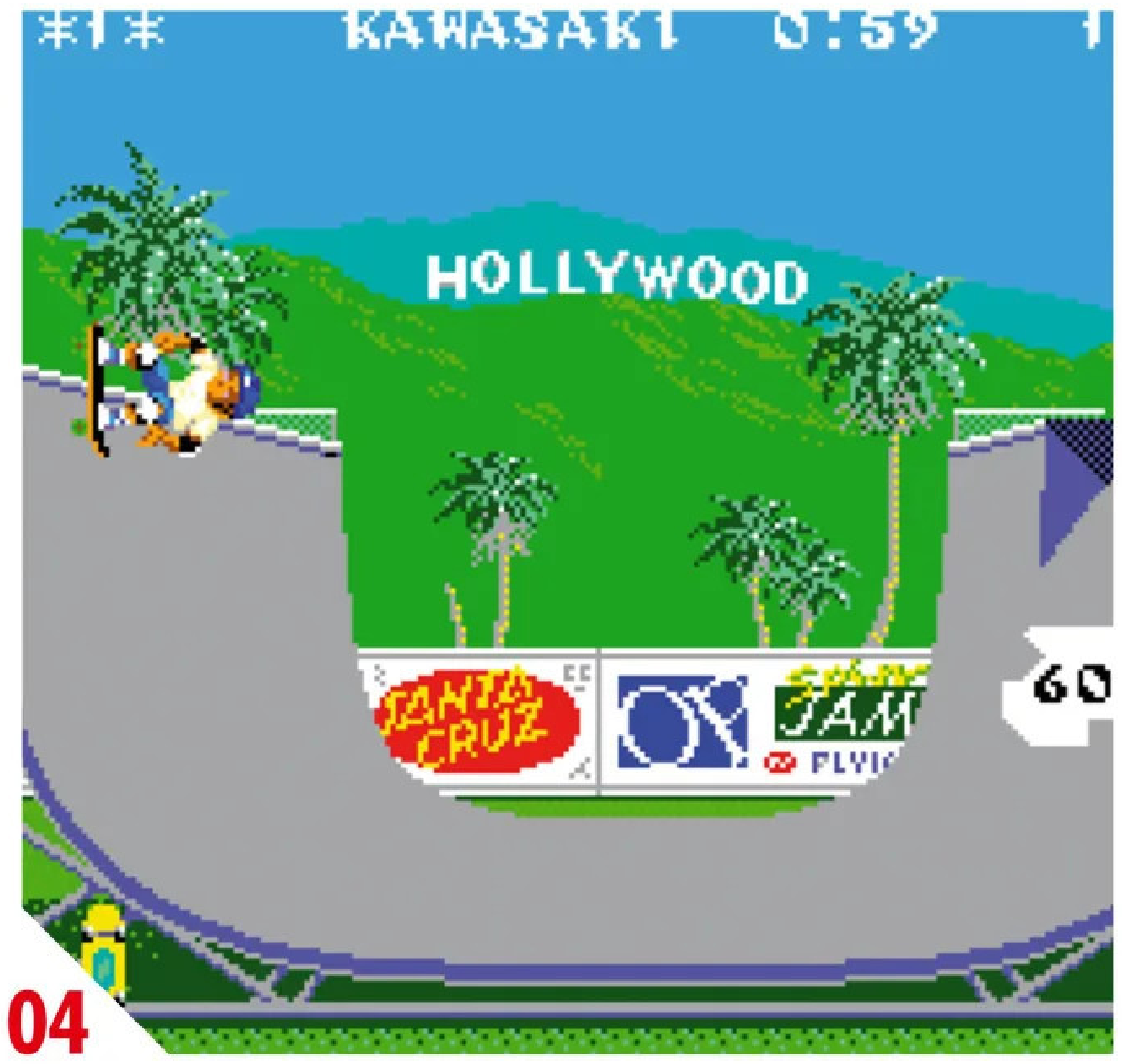


04

### Psycho Fox

**Released:** 1989
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** Vic Tokai
**By the same developer:** Block Gal

**01** It's not the greatest platformer ever made, but it was one of the few Master System titles that went on to become synonymous with the system. And any game about a fox battling a god has to make it on to some kind of list. Apparently the prequel to the awesomely entitled *Magical Flying Hat Turbo Adventure* (which would later become known as *DecapAttack* in the West), *Psycho Fox* is a wonderfully vivid platform adventure that's quite a bugger to master if we're being totally frank. Boasting Mario-style warping and the funniest attack in any videogame ever; a punch which looks a little like Psycho Fox is continually getting enamoured and knocking things out with something that resembles a hairy slowworm chewing on an apple. We'll let you guys fill in the blanks.

### Alex Kidd in Miracle World

**Released:** 1986
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** In-house
**By the same developer:** Virtua Racing

**02** The coolest videogame character ever was doing the heavy-fringed, shell-suited look long before the words 'our' and 'kid' were annoyingly put together. Living inside the Master System II, this game would be hailed as the greatest freebie in videogame lore (until *Christmas NiGHTS* was given away with a magazine many years later), and by default it became the console's quintessential platformer. As big-fisted Alex Kidd, players must traverse imaginative worlds to compete in the Paper, Scissors and Stone World Cup. He's up against competitors that have had intense plastic surgery to make themselves look like a piece of paper, a pair of scissors and a fleshy rock, in the hope it will give them an edge in the competition. Jerks.

### Operation Wolf

**Released:** 1990
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** In-house
**By the same developer:** Space Harrier

**03** Taito was faced with the very difficult decision of which direction to steer this project in. It could either take the veterinary-arcade simulator route with an emphasis on saving wolves, or create a game about one man with a gun taking on a coconut shy of angry soldiers while helping to liberate a group of thoroughly terrified hostages. Taito decided to roll with the latter option – the correct decision, we reckon. With the Master System's chunky Light Phaser controlling your shooting and a second pad providing the trigger for your grenade attacks, playing the game while sitting on a tumble dryer – thus replicating the sensation of the arcade cab's recoil – all made for a really great home conversion of this warfare classic. All things considered, it's possibly the Master System's finest arcade conversion.

### California Games

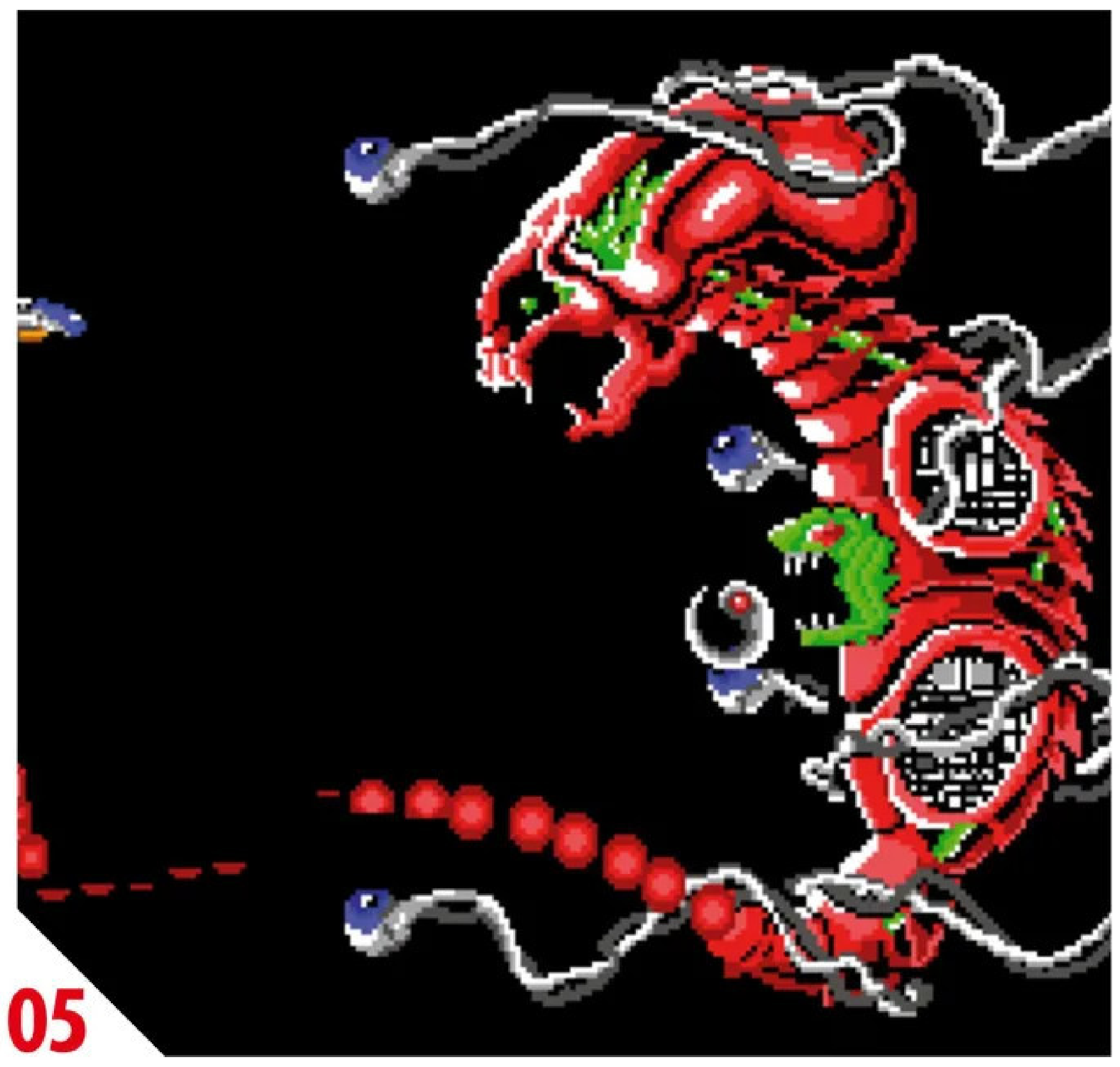
**Released:** 1987
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** Epyx
**By the same developer:** Impossible Mission

**04** The 8-bit consoles weren't really renowned for their fantastic sporting titles, and the Master System had some of the worst examples on any system. If anyone has ever been unlucky enough to play any of the machine's 'Great' series of sports titles (*Great Football*, *Great Soccer*, Great juxtaposition of the word Great) you'll know exactly where we're coming from. And don't even get us started on *Basketball Nightmare*. However, you may well remember the Earth tilting slightly on its axis after the release of Epyx's brilliant *California Games*. While playing through the game's six events had a tendency to make you feel like one of those annoying kids from *Saved By The Bell*, in its own goofy way it offered a nice slice of sun-kissed sporting action, and it looked fantastic to boot.

### R-Type

**Released:** 1987
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** Irem
**By the same developer:** In the Hunt

**05** The force is strong in this conversion. Irem's classic side-scrolling blaster is still one of the finest examples of the genre. Apart from the annoying flickering of the enemies, the Master System port offers an incredibly faithful reproduction of the game's bleak Giger frames and its myriad bullet-spewing enemies. *R-Type* is teeming with memorable sections, but arguably the most iconic is the encounter with the game's first boss, Dobkeratops. When those lights faded and you encountered death's alien glare in the form of an ugly giant shrimp, you knew those Bydo boys weren't the type of evil intergalactic federation to just roll over and hand you the keys to their demise. A fantastic conversion that even boasts its very own secret level.



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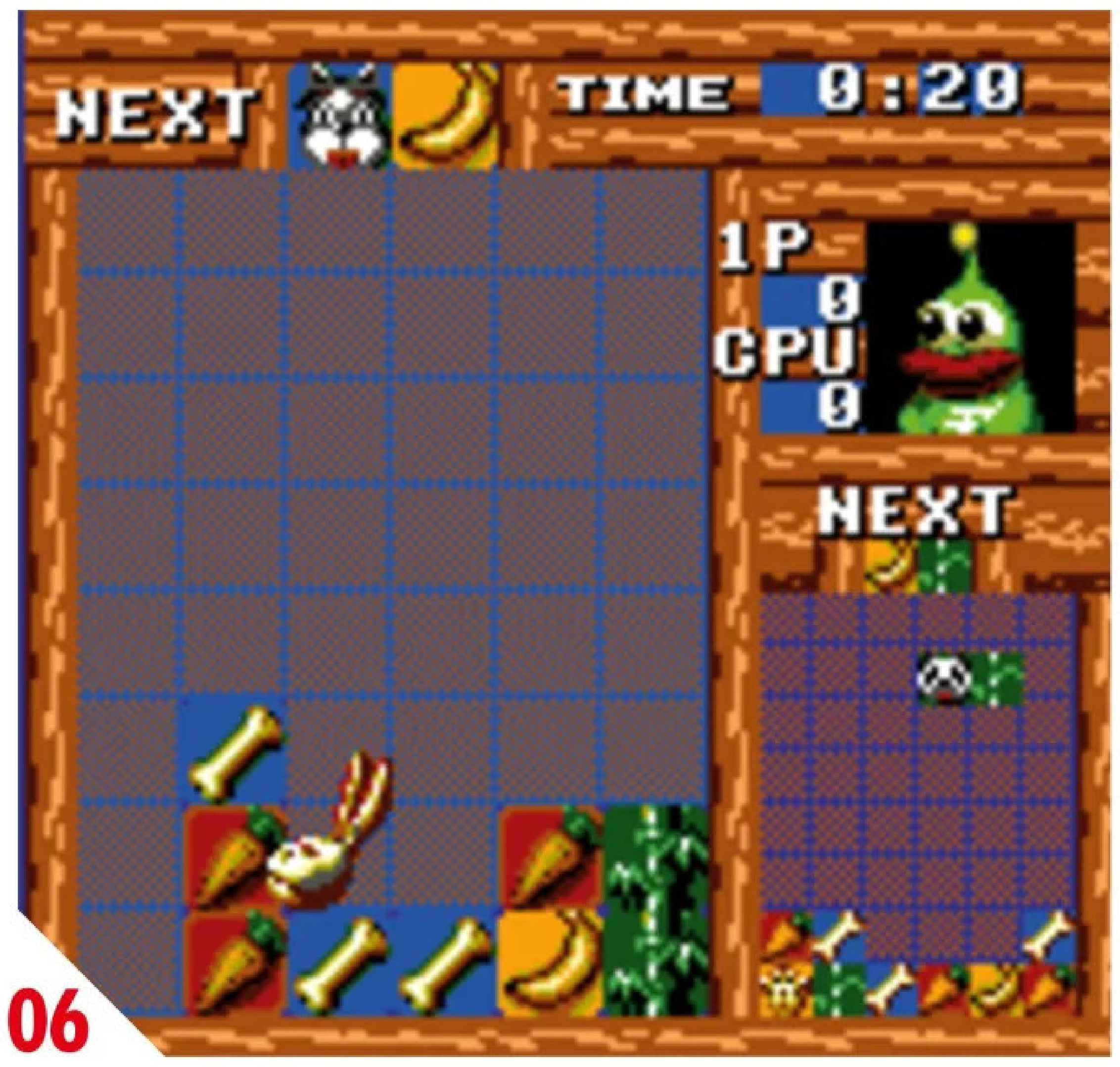

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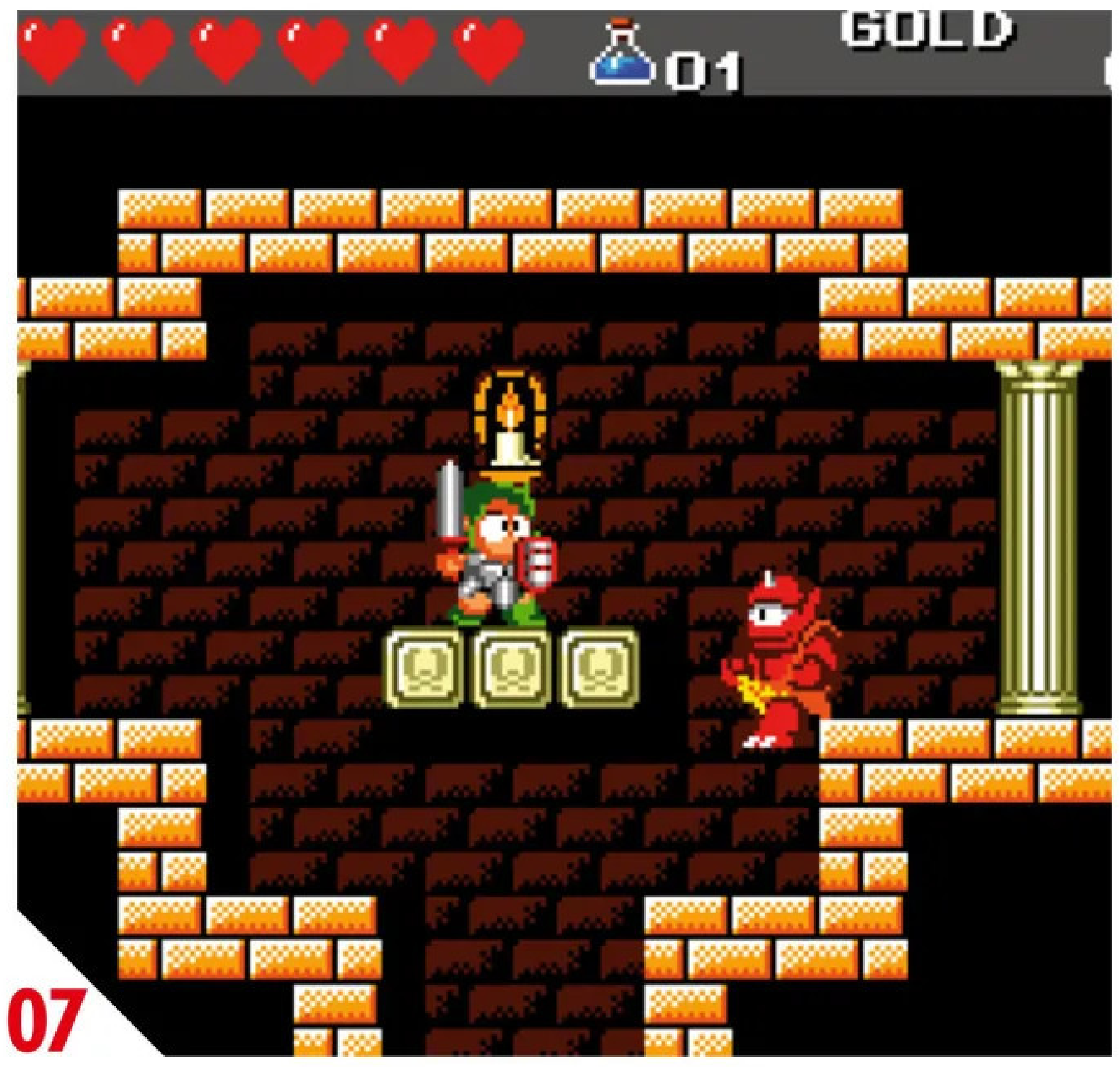

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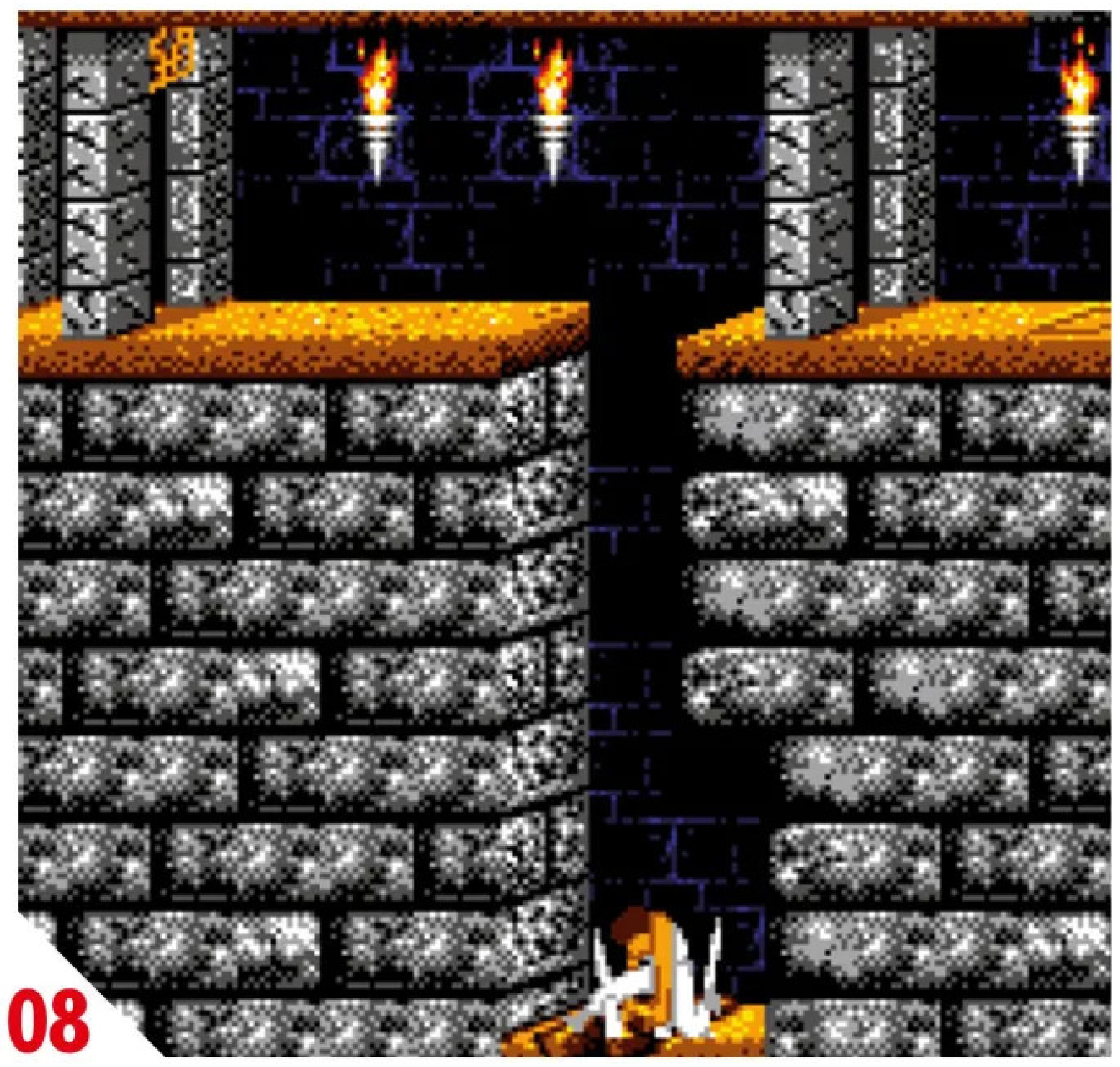

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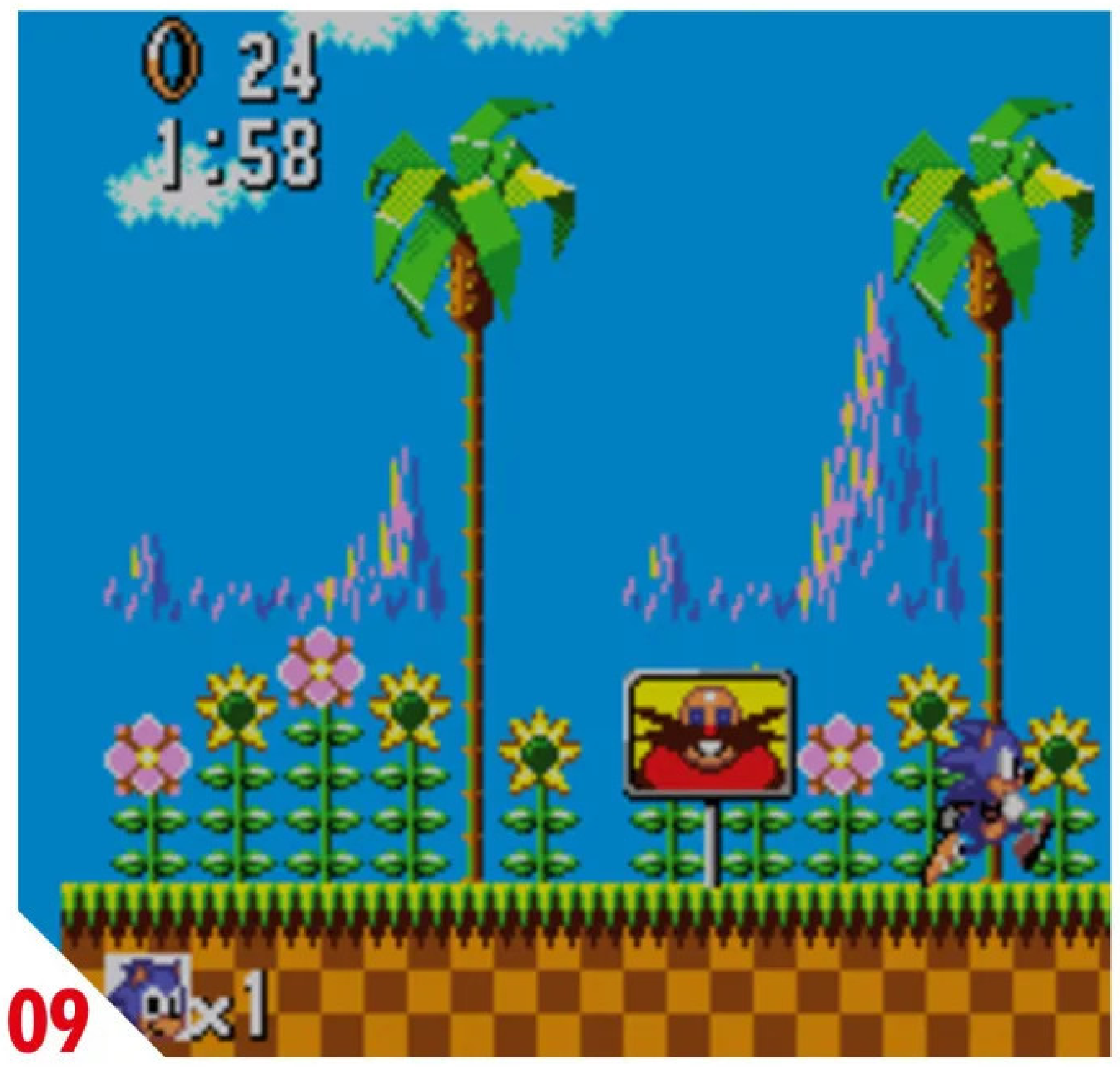

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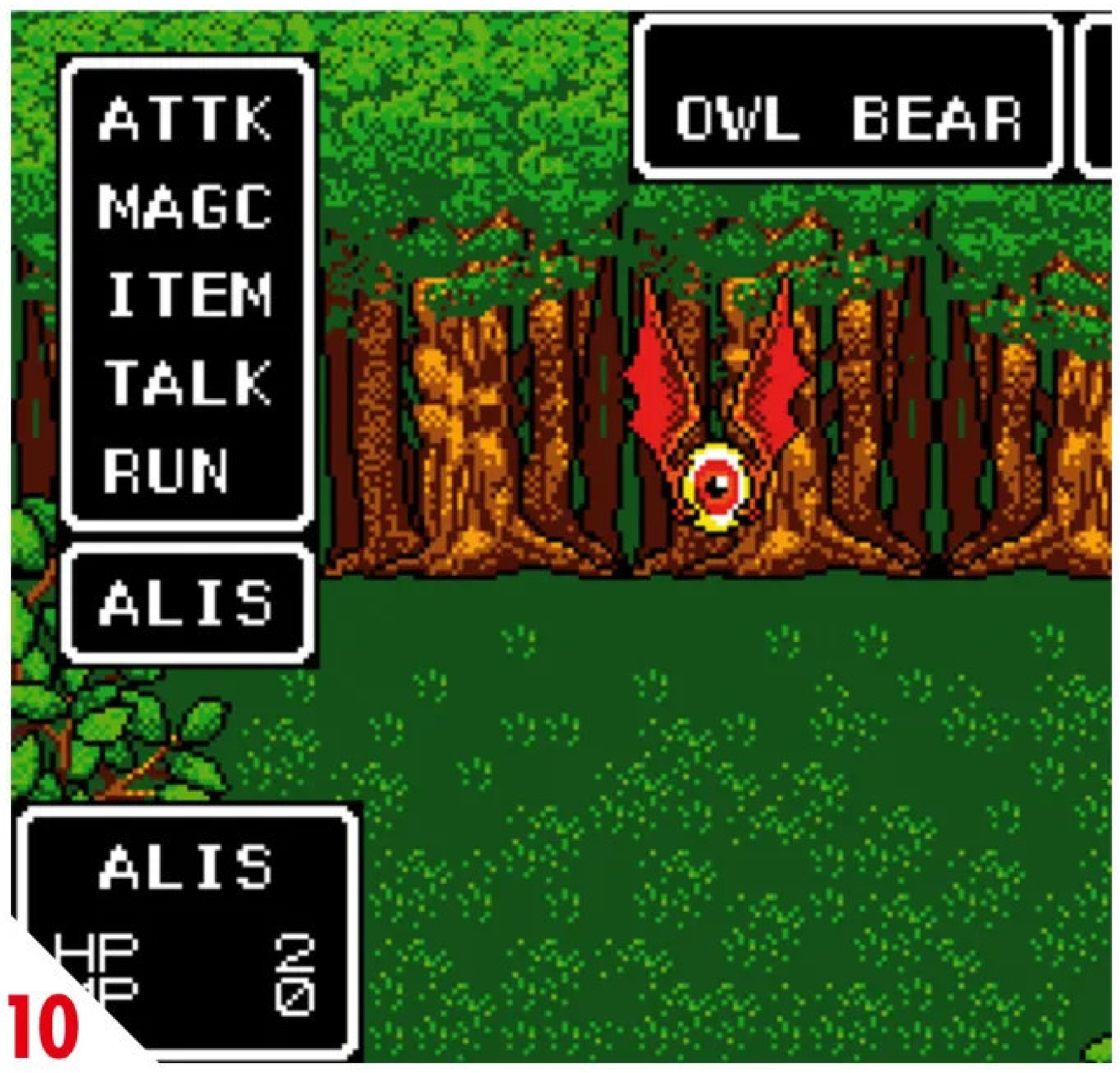


10

## Baku Baku Animal

**Released:** 1998
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** In-House
**By the same developer:**
Space Harrier

06 Yes, it's another tried and tested take on *Tetris*, but Sega's excellent *Baku Baku Animal* was a puzzle game that finally gave those faceless regimented sprites a touch of character. The falling tiles here were made up of either different types of food or animal faces, and the aim was to simply bunch the falling groceries together and get the corresponding animals to consume them. So the dogs were grouped with the bones, the monkeys with the bananas, the rabbits with the carrots and the pandas with the, well, we're sure you get the idea. It all makes for an incredibly enjoyable little puzzle game that also happens to be extremely addictive. It certainly cocks a leg and whizzes over the Mega Drive yawn-fest that is *Columns*. Arguably the Master System's best puzzler – you can quote us on that.

## Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap

**Released:** 1989
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** Westone
**By the same developer:**
Wonder Boy In Monster Land

07 Regarded as the pinnacle of a long and highly convoluted myriad of multi-titled games, *Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap* was yet another stellar addition to this stable of run-'n'-jump-cum-adventure-type outings. This one is also the most finely tuned in terms of gameplay and, despite its length, it somehow maintains a fantastic pace throughout. Within its first few minutes you enter a castle, blind some cyclops, uncover a strange dungeon and battle a dinobot that turns you into a dragon with its last dying breath. After that you're turned into a wide variety of different animals, each of which gradually allows you to explore more and more of the huge game world. *The Dragon's Trap* is a great adventure that every Master System fan needs to own.

## Prince of Persia

**Released:** 1989
**Published by:** Br0derbund
**Created by:** In-House
**By the same developer:**
Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?

08 You have 60 minutes to find a way through this Persian rat-maze to try and stop the evil Grand Vizier Jaffa from marrying your girlfriend and fooling around with her on a giant, rotating heart-shaped bed. This will be no easy feat, however, as the route is precarious and the pitfalls are plenty. But with a game so fluid and colourful, seeing your Arabian protagonist drop a thousand feet and hit the ground like a sack of potatoes was one of the most charming-looking deaths to be found on the Master System. This conversion – like all the rest – looks great. The only bad point to be found is the Master System's doughy D-pad isn't really a fan of precision. It's still a cracking platformer though and is arguably one of the greatest on the System. If only it wasn't so hard.

## Sonic the Hedgehog

**Released:** 1991
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** In-House
**By the same developer:**
Outrun

09 Up, down, left, right, A, B, C, Start, sadly proved impossible to perform on the Master System's cumbersome control pad, but the most well-known level-select cheat ever wasn't the only thing that was altered for the Master System port. Due to the graphical 8-bit chasm that presented itself, Sonic's first (and second, for that matter) outing on the system was a complete redux of its 16-bit sibling. However, the Master System version was all the better for it and proved to be a stunning platformer in its own right. It also meant that those who were lucky enough to own both a Master System and a Mega Drive would be treated to two slightly differing classic Sonic adventures. Now surely that can only ever be seen as a very good thing?

## Phantasy Star

**Released:** 1988
**Published by:** SEGA
**Created by:** In-House
**By the same developer:**
Ristar

10 Sega's freshman RPG epic would smite its inaugural winged-eyeball on the Master System. There's a tiring amount of features, strategy and powering-up in the game, and the 3D tunnel effects were dazzling. *Phantasy Star* was a more than worthy sparring partner to Miyamoto's prevalent *Zelda* and Square's *Final Fantasy* series, mainly because it chose a setting that was instantly at odds with the generic fantasy worlds of those games. It's a beautifully constructed game, boasting a fantastically epic planet-hopping storyline polarised around one girl's quest to seek revenge for the untimely death of her nosey brother. However, unlike Sega's sophomore retribution epic, the original *Phantasy Star* doesn't pick up its football and disappear home in the 89th minute.

# DISNEY'S ADVENTURES OF THE GUMMI BEARS

If you're somehow looking at these pages without *that* theme tune bouncing around in your head, the only plausible explanation is that you never saw this hit TV show when it aired in the mid-to-late '80s. Partially inspired by the jelly sweets first made by Haribo way back in 1922 (an admittedly odd starting point), Disney's *Gummi Bears* series debuted in September 1985, running for 94 individual episodes in total until 1991.

The premise of the show was simple enough – six bears (seven after Gusto joins the group at the end of season two) living in a fantasy land are tasked with protecting the secrets of Gummiberry juice and attempting to foster friendship with neighbouring humans. The elixir in question is what gives the Gummi Bears the ability to go 'bouncing here and there and everywhere' as the theme song so enthusiastically claims, although it has different effects on other creatures – its ability to give humans super-strength, for instance, makes it a lucrative target for many of the show's villains, who repeatedly look to steal the potion or even the recipe and use it in their own nefarious plans.

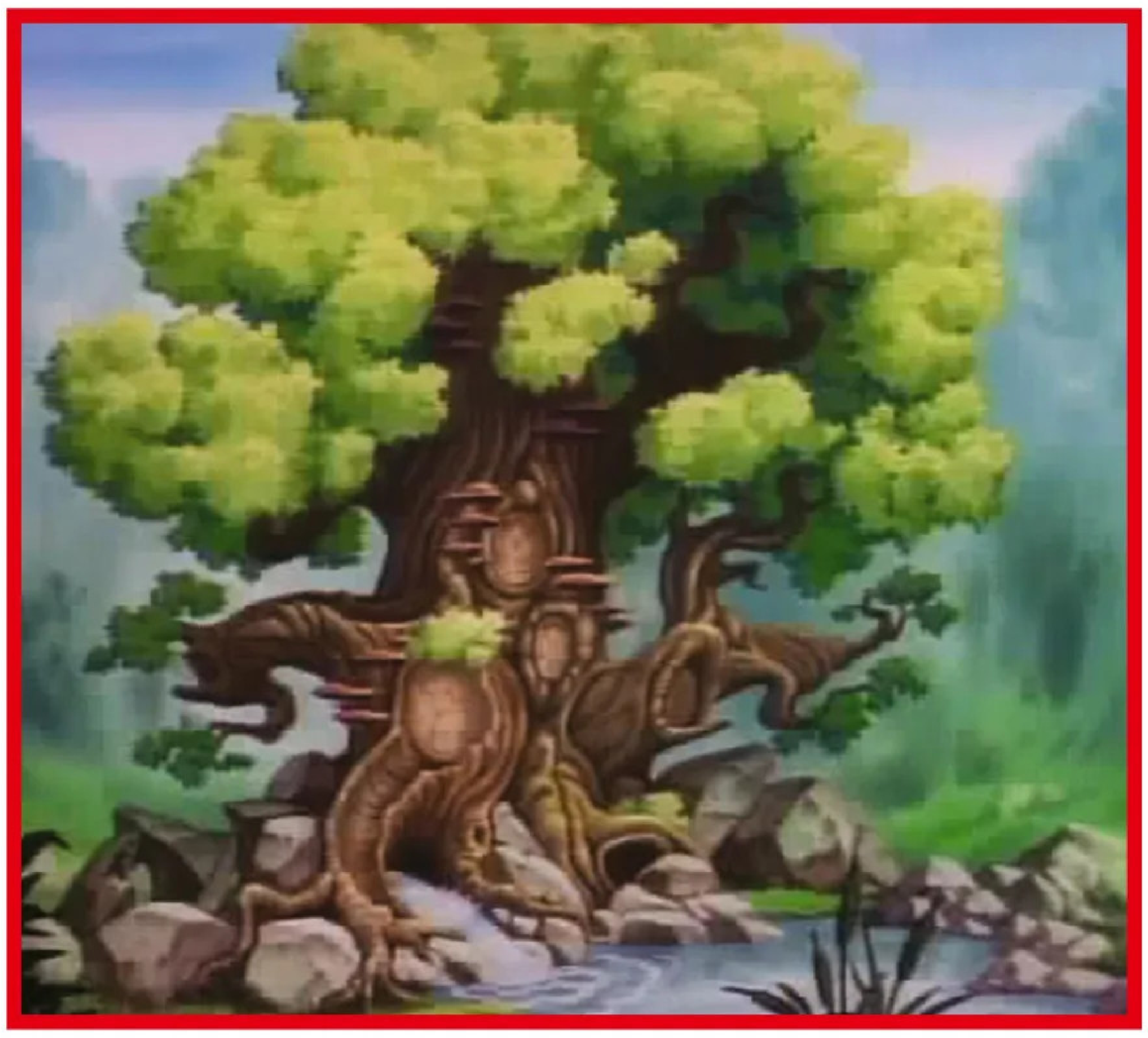
The series' popularity was such that it was commissioned for six straight seasons, making it the longest-running Disney cartoon series in terms of seasons – *DuckTales* and *The Lion King's Timon & Pumbaa* both ran for more episodes, only across four and five seasons respectively. Even if its only contribution to popular culture was to give us its glorious theme tune, *Gummi Bears* would still have done the world an incredible service.

## Information

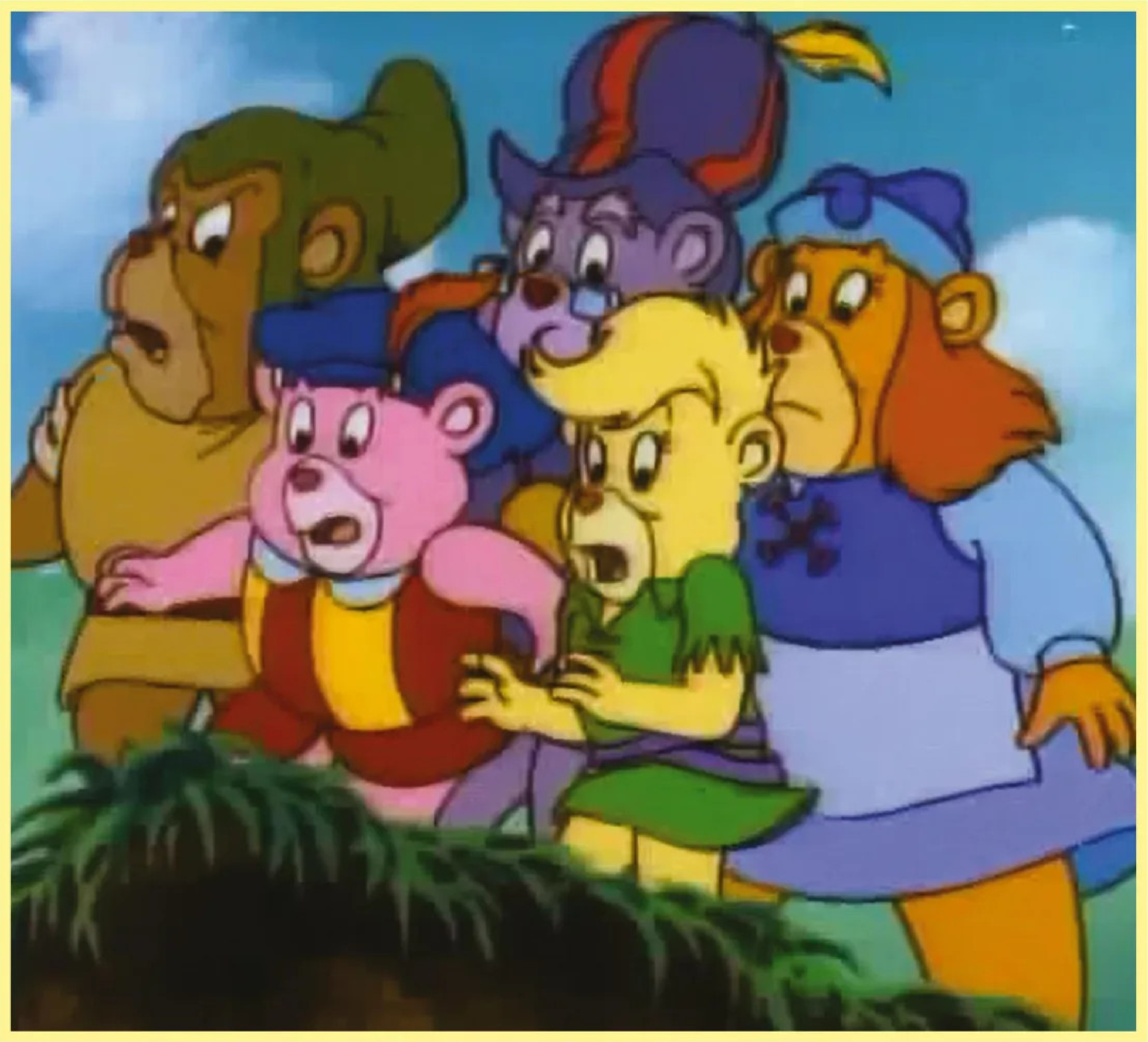
**Manufacturer:** Walt Disney
**First released:** 1985
**Expect to pay:** £5-10 (VHS), £15-20 (DVD)

### Sunni

A young female Gummi who is infatuated with human culture and dreams of becoming a princess. Her lack of knowledge of her own culture can end up hurting her.

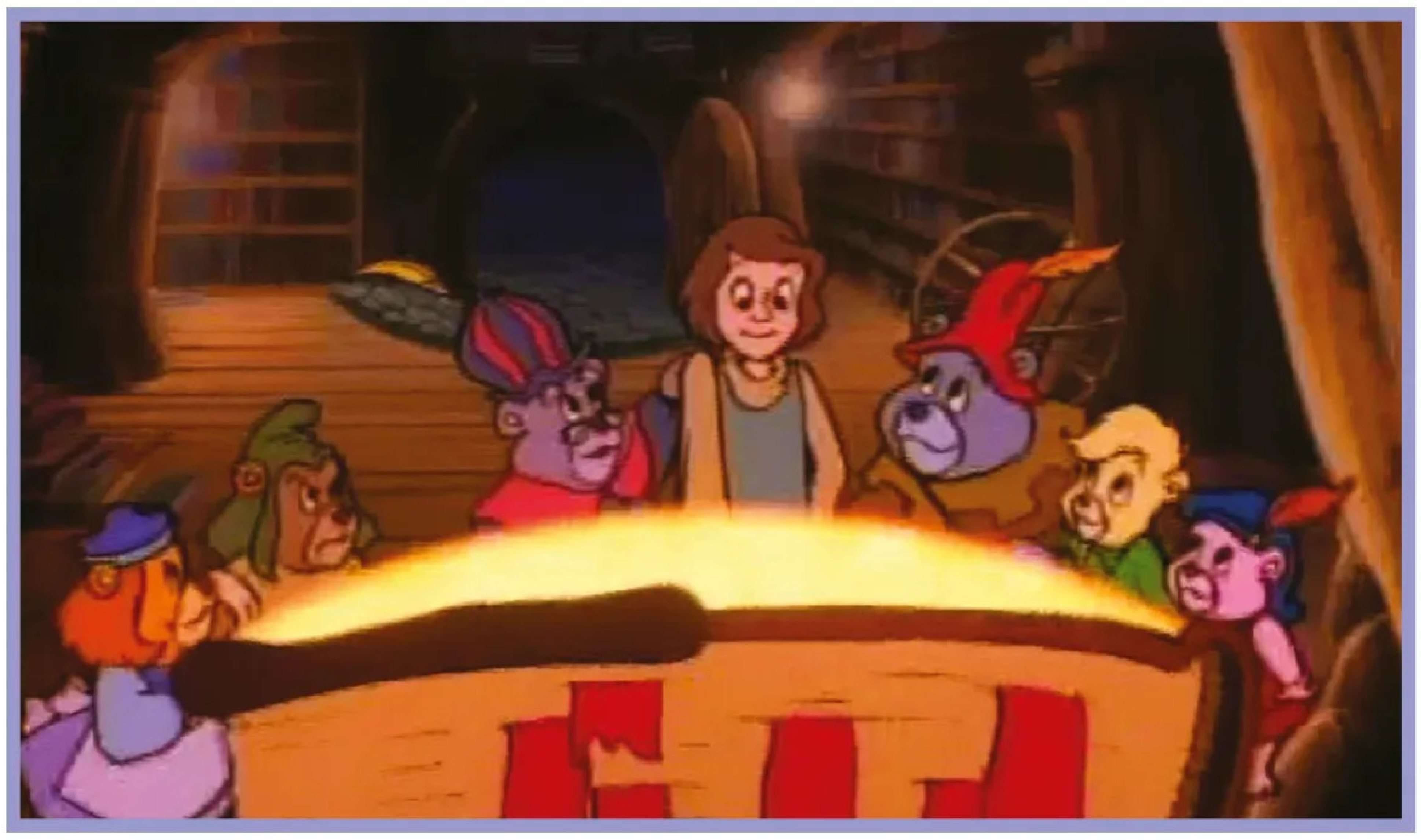


*Gummi Bears* was apparently pitched as a show by Disney's then-CEO Michael Eisner, whose kids loved the candy of the same name. Though the idea wasn't met with a lot of enthusiasm, it proved to be a huge hit.



**Tummi**

This chunky bear is basically a big kid, and loves nothing more than filling his belly. He's not just a glutton, though – he's proven his capability in a number of fields.



**Zummi**

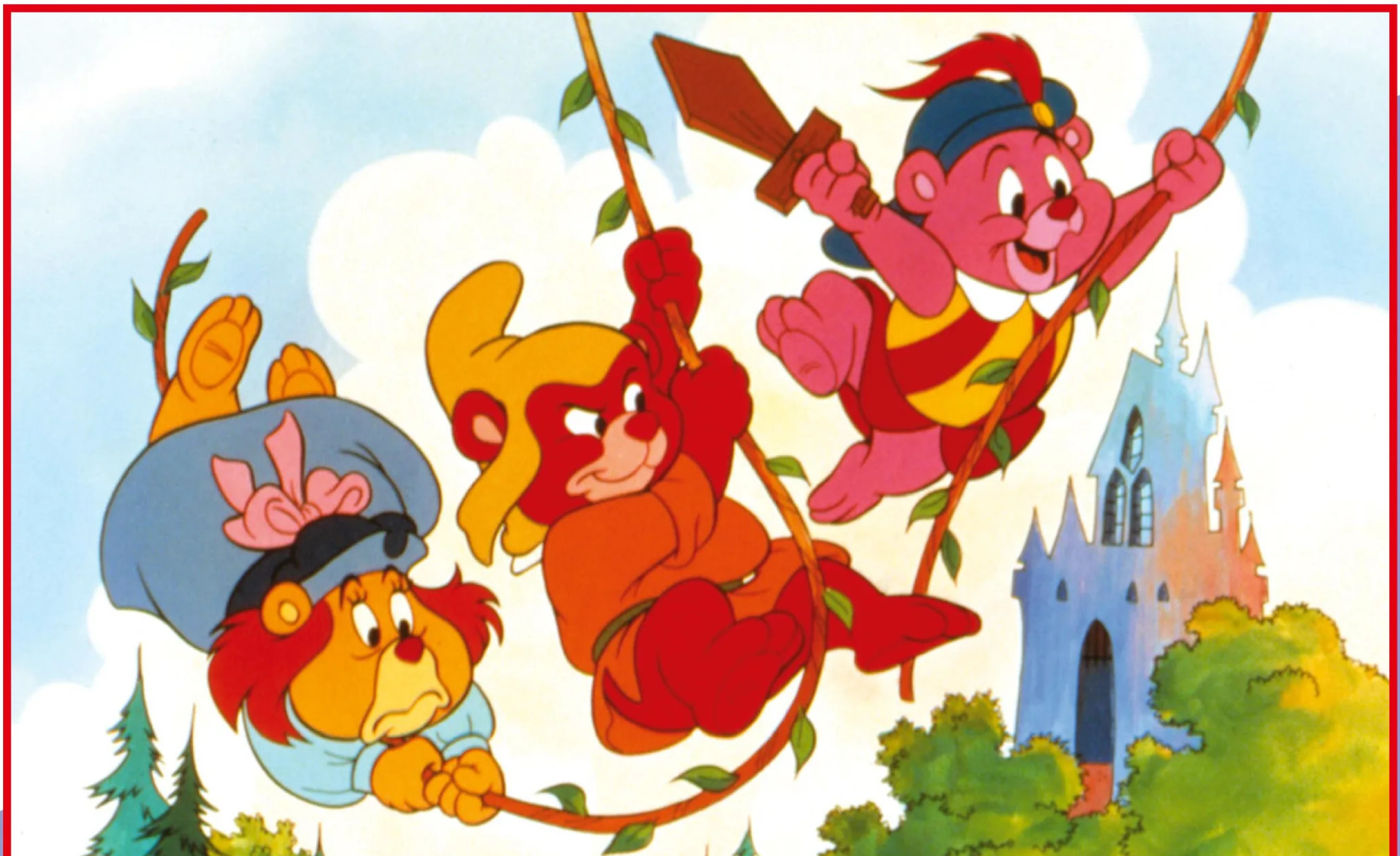
The eldest of the bunch, Zummi isn't just a snappy dresser. He's also 'Keeper Of Gummi Wisdom' and, with the help of the Gummi-Medallion, the group's magician.

**Gruffi**

The leader of the group and a believer in doing things 'the Gummi way,' whatever that means. Gruffi is a skilled craftsman as well as a strong, steadfast leader.

### THE LEGACY

*Gummi Bears* is credited by many as having paved the way for the Disney Afternoon cartoon block, and was even featured as the first show in the block when it began in 1990. That slot would later be filled by other classics like *DuckTales, Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers, TaleSpin* and *Darkwing Duck*. Fans wanting to relive the magic today might have a tough time getting hold of all the episodes, though – the DVD release of the first three seasons is easy to track down, but later seasons only appear to be available as part of an extremely rare complete DVD box set.



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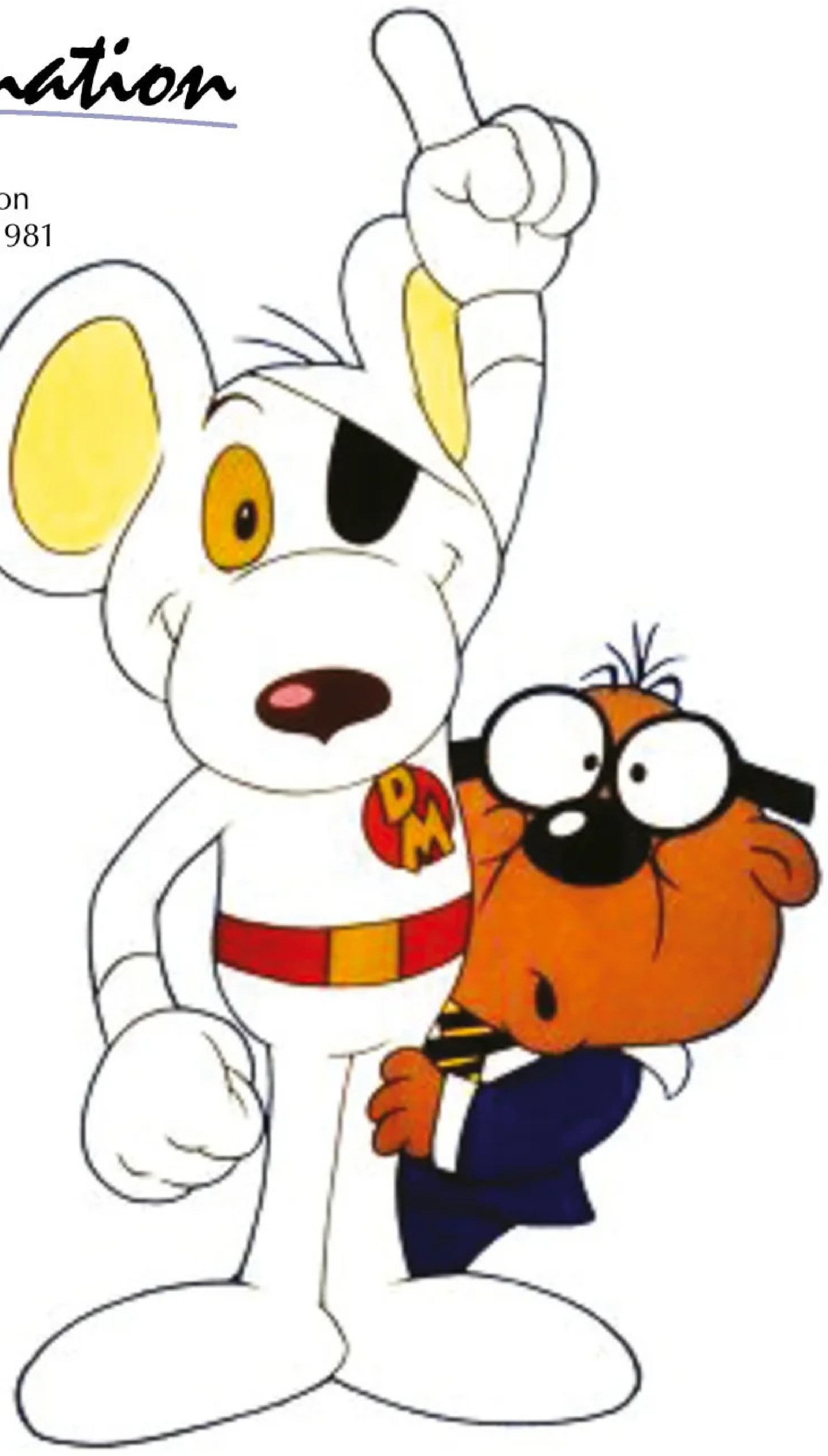
# DANGER MOUSE

### Information

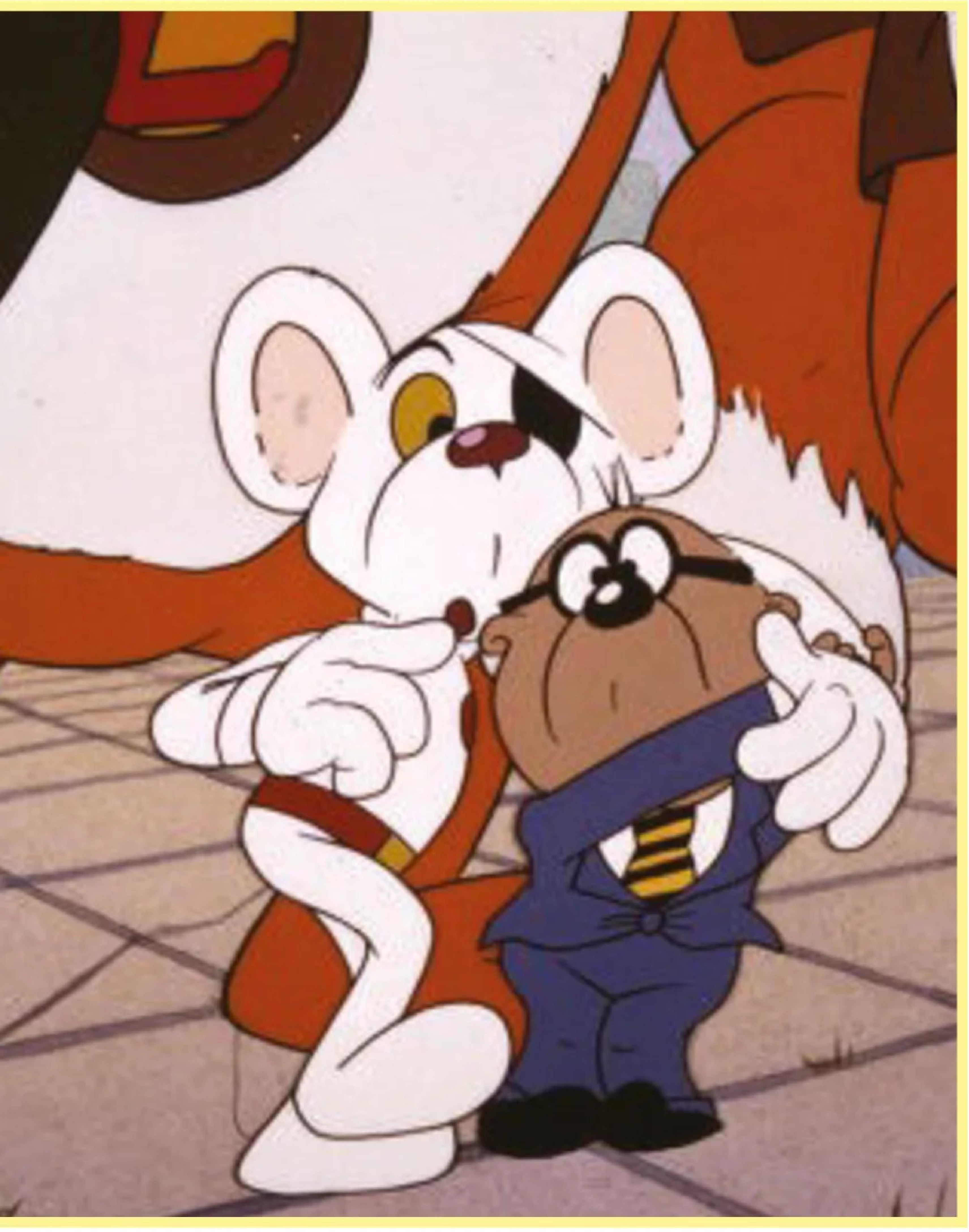
**Manufacturer:**
Thames Television
**First released:** 1981

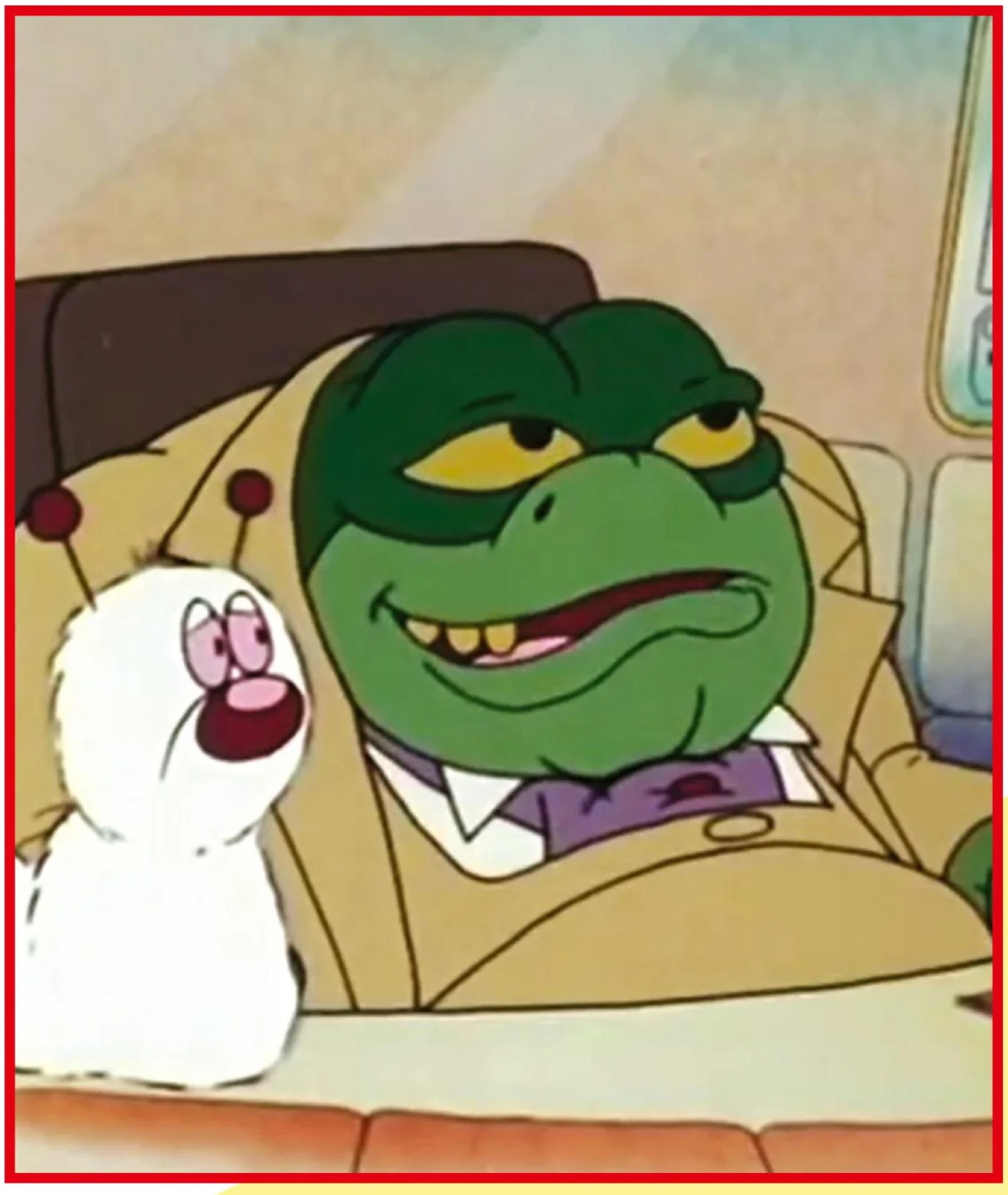


No cartoon captured the spirit of being British quite like *Danger Mouse* did. Based on native spy fiction such as *Danger Man* and *James Bond*, the show centred around Danger Mouse himself, "the world's greatest secret agent." Armed with the secret martial art of kung moggy, 34 languages and an iconic eye-patch, Danger Mouse teamed up with his bumbling sidekick Penfold to put a stop to the evil schemes of his wheezy toad nemesis Baron Silas Greenback.

Danger Mouse was voiced by David Jason, who rose to fame in comedy *Open All Hours* and had just started a starring role in *Only Fools and Horses*. Jason's comedy talent enabled him to give Danger Mouse a cheeky persona, as the hero needed to deliver witty one-liners with as much confidence as he'd deal with Greenback's many traps and tricks. *Danger Mouse* was also a lavish production, despite only being ten minutes long – one episode featured over 2,000 drawings.

But it was the British humour that really shone through: the endless puns, the stiff upper-lip and the cries of "oh heck!" and "oh fiddle!" from Penfold. In fact, *Danger Mouse* had such a strong British streak of humour that it appealed to Americans who were fascinated by the jokes, quick wit and references such as a red postbox serving as Danger Mouse's HQ. It became the first British cartoon to appear on US TV channel Nickelodeon and at its peak, *Danger Mouse* hit 21 million viewers – one of the biggest success stories of the '80s.

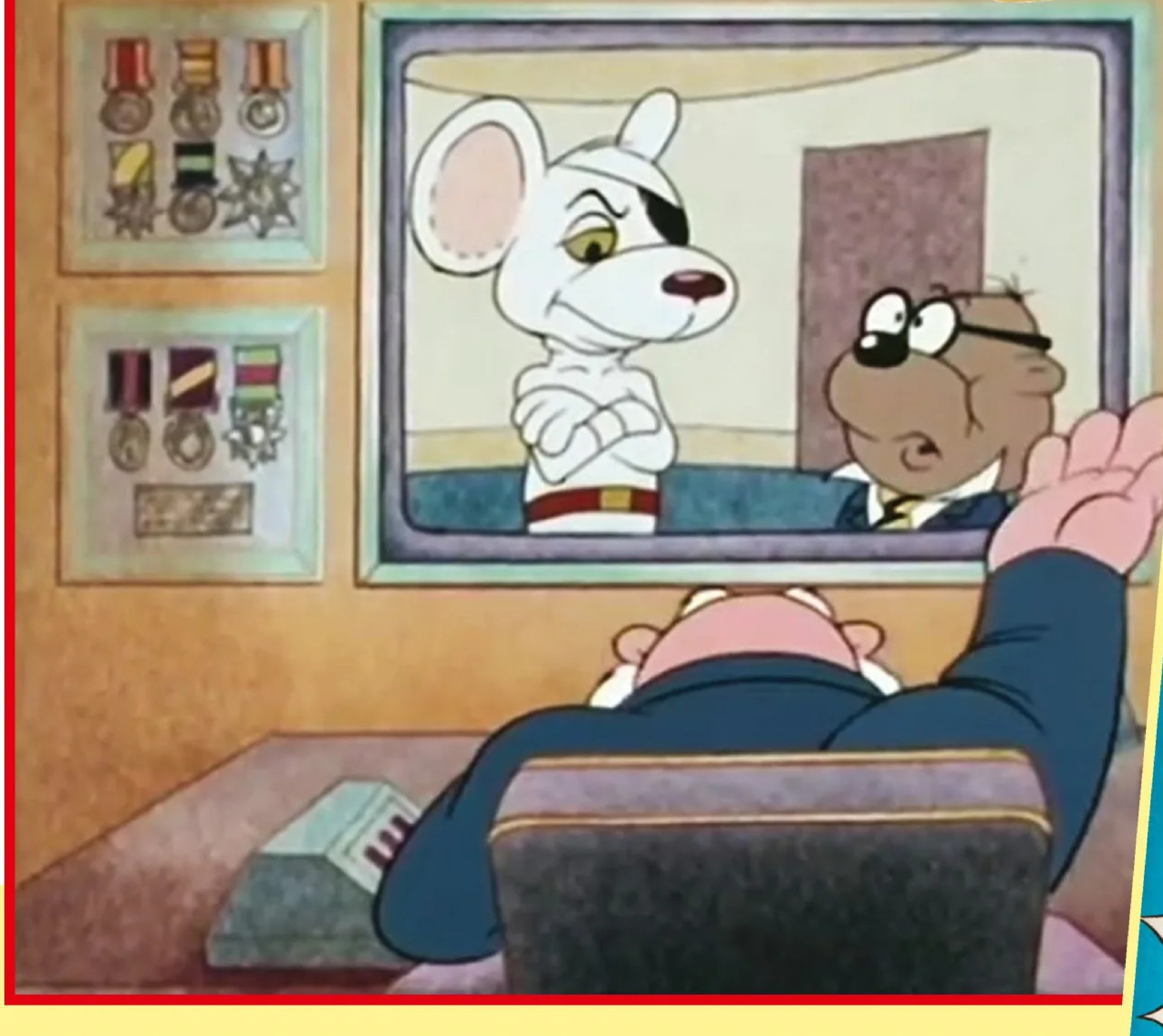




### THE LEGACY

Danger Mouse villain Count Duckula earned his own spin-off cartoon, which ran for four seasons. But Danger Mouse himself returned in 2015 for a reboot, which brought in the likes of comedian Stephen Fry and Pointless host Alexander Armstrong as voices. It became the highest-rated show on CBBC within three weeks of airing, pulling in 2.4 million viewers, and has been commissioned for a second series.

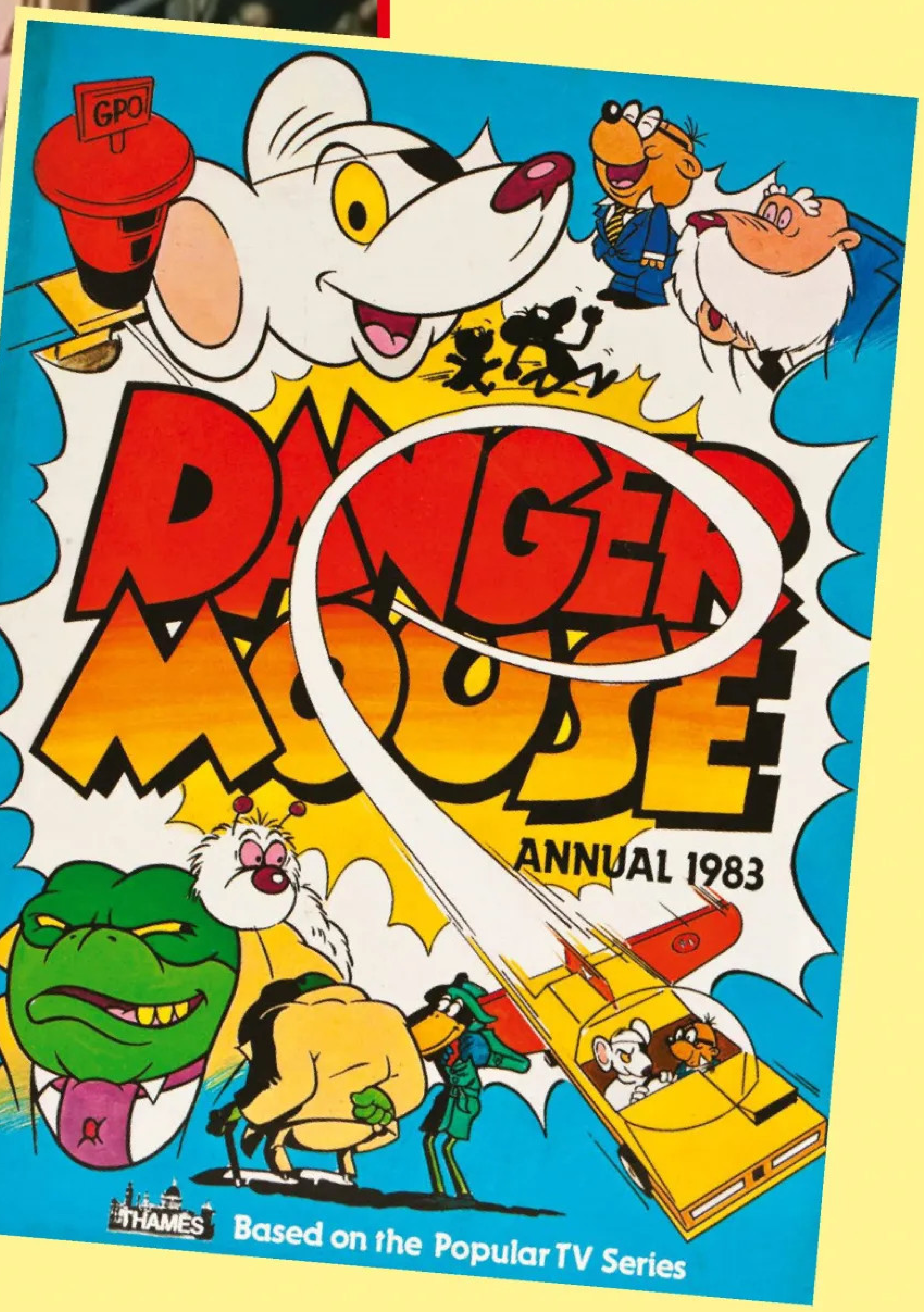
*Danger Mouse* took place in Baker Street, the same setting for the famous Sherlock Holmes novels.



Danger Mouse's assistant is Penfold, who is a hamster, even though he was often assumed by fans of the show to be a mole. He's a somewhat cowardly figure next to Danger Mouse and is sometimes called 'Jig Saw' because he goes to pieces when trouble arises.

Danger Mouse's boss is Colonel K, who appears at the beginning of episodes to give the duo their mission, and again at the end to debrief them. The exceptions are when the episodes are based on Colonel K getting into trouble, such as when he gets kidnapped.

One of the biggest secrets about Danger Mouse is how he lost his eye, or even if he lost it at all. It's never revealed throughout the series what actually happened, leaving viewers to ponder the mystery for themselves.



# TRANSFORMERS

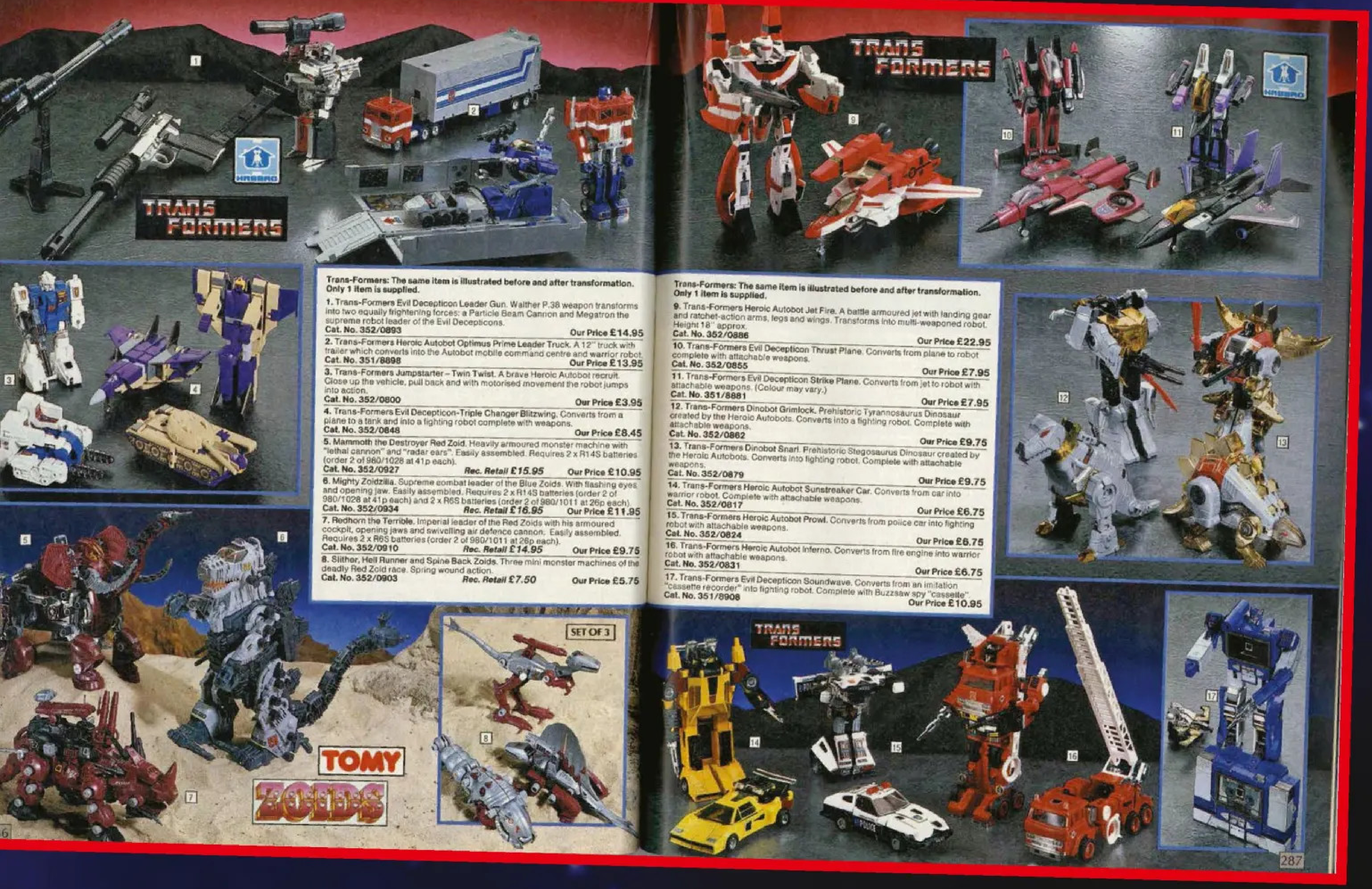
Best toys ever?
They're certainly Prime candidates...

While the 'more than meets the eye' tag line refers to the shape-shifting abilities of Hasbro's iconic robots, it applies equally well to the origins of the series itself. For many of us, our first real experiences of Transformers will have been watching the cartoon or circling Optimus Prime in an Argos catalogue, but the series' true origins massively predate these fond memories. You see, Transformers as we know it came about after Hasbro was impressed with two toy-lines at the Tokyo Toy Show in 1993 – Takara's Microman and Diaclone – and sought to pick them up for the Western market. Concerned about launching two similar new toy-lines alongside one another, Hasbro instead elected to roll the two into one, rebranding models and concepts from both lines under the new Transformers banner.

The majority of the first few waves of Transformers toys were adapted – many almost unchanged – from the Diaclone 'Car Robots' toys that debuted in 1982, while those designs not focused on vehicular transformations were typically pulled in from or inspired by the Microman 'Micro Change' line. Ever wonder why Soundwave turned into a tape recorder when all his mates could turn into trucks, sports cars and planes? Now you know.

Hasbro had the toys sorted well ahead of the 1984 release of Transformers, then, but it felt the brand needed more than just a cool gimmick. It needed lore, a story, a reason for the Autobots and Decepticons to be locked into their epic clash of good versus evil. For this, Hasbro turned to Marvel Comics to produce identities and a back-story for the robots, and while Marvel's names and tech specs all made it through to us intact, a lot of the originally proposed story was altered or lost entirely in Sunbow's accompanying animated series. It might surprise you to know that Transformers was actually once considered part of the Marvel universe, with the comic series even having cameos from the likes of Spider-Man and Nick Fury at the time.

The three-pronged strike of a set of cool toys, a flashy animated TV show and a comic series where these new heroes rubbed shoulders with some of fiction's finest was an immediate success story, to the point that Takara quickly dissolved its


TRANS FORMERS
HASBRO
TOMY
ZOIDS
SET OF 3
287

**Trans-Formers: The same item is illustrated before and after transformation. Only 1 item is supplied.**

**1. Trans-Formers Evil Decepticon Leader Gun.** Walther P.38 weapon transforms into two equally frightening forces: a Particle Beam Cannon and Megatron the supreme robot leader of the Evil Decepticons.
**Cat. No. 352/0893** **Our Price £14.95**

**2. Trans-Formers Heroic Autobot Optimus Prime Leader Truck.** A 12" truck with trailer which converts into the Autobot mobile command centre and warrior robot.
**Cat. No. 351/8898** **Our Price £13.95**

**3. Trans-Formers Jumpstarter – Twin Twist.** A brave Heroic Autobot recruit. Close up the vehicle, pull back and with motorised movement the robot jumps into action.
**Cat. No. 352/0800** **Our Price £3.95**

**4. Trans-Formers Evil Decepticon-Triple Changer Blitzwing.** Converts from a plane to a tank and into a fighting robot complete with weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0848** **Our Price £8.45**

**5. Mammoth the Destroyer Red Zoid.** Heavily armoured monster machine with "lethal cannon" and "radar ears". Easily assembled. Requires 2 x R14S batteries (order 2 of 980/1028 at 41p each).
**Cat. No. 352/0927** ***Rec. Retail £15.95*** **Our Price £10.95**

**6. Mighty Zoidzilla.** Supreme combat leader of the Blue Zoids. With flashing eyes and opening jaw. Easily assembled. Requires 2 x R14S batteries (order 2 of 980/1028 at 41p each) and 2 x R6S batteries (order 2 of 980/1011 at 26p each).
**Cat. No. 352/0934** ***Rec. Retail £16.95*** **Our Price £11.95**

**7. Redhorn the Terrible.** Imperial leader of the Red Zoids with his armoured cockpit, opening jaws and swivelling air defence cannon. Easily assembled. Requires 2 x R6S batteries (order 2 of 980/1011 at 26p each).
**Cat. No. 352/0910** ***Rec. Retail £14.95*** **Our Price £9.75**

**8. Slither, Hell Runner and Spine Back Zoids.** Three mini monster machines of the deadly Red Zoid race. Spring wound action.
**Cat. No. 352/0903** ***Rec. Retail £7.50*** **Our Price £5.75**

**Trans-Formers: The same item is illustrated before and after transformation. Only 1 item is supplied.**

**9. Trans-Formers Heroic Autobot Jet Fire.** A battle armoured jet with landing gear and ratchet-action arms, legs and wings. Transforms into multi-weaponed robot. Height 18" approx.
**Cat. No. 352/0886** **Our Price £22.95**

**10. Trans-Formers Evil Decepticon Thrust Plane.** Converts from plane to robot complete with attachable weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0855** **Our Price £7.95**

**11. Trans-Formers Evil Decepticon Strike Plane.** Converts from jet to robot with attachable weapons. (Colour may vary.)
**Cat. No. 351/8881** **Our Price £7.95**

**12. Trans-Formers Dinobot Grimlock.** Prehistoric Tyrannosaurus Dinosaur created by the Heroic Autobots. Converts into a fighting robot. Complete with attachable weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0862** **Our Price £9.75**

**13. Trans-Formers Dinobot Snarl.** Prehistoric Stegosaurus Dinosaur created by the Heroic Autobots. Converts into fighting robot. Complete with attachable weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0879** **Our Price £9.75**

**14. Trans-Formers Heroic Autobot Sunstreaker Car.** Converts from car into warrior robot. Complete with attachable weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0817** **Our Price £6.75**

**15. Trans-Formers Heroic Autobot Prowl.** Converts from police car into fighting robot with attachable weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0824** **Our Price £6.75**

**16. Trans-Formers Heroic Autobot Inferno.** Converts from fire engine into warrior robot with attachable weapons.
**Cat. No. 352/0831** **Our Price £6.75**

**17. Trans-Formers Evil Decepticon Soundwave.** Converts from an imitation "cassette recorder" into fighting robot. Complete with Buzzsaw spy "cassette".
**Cat. No. 351/8908** **Our Price £10.95**

## Masterpiece figures

While in limited supply and extremely expensive, these die-cast versions of the classic G1 characters are the most detailed and intricate you can get. While they still retain their original transformations, their metal parts, weight and price mean they're certainly not toys… well, not toys for children, at least.

> **"For the most avid collectors, there's even the option to expand beyond Transformers-branded items"**

own original Diaclone and Microman lines to instead produce new figures under the Transformers brand for Japan as well.

## GOING GLOBAL

While Hasbro did everything it could to meet incredible demand for the toys by reworking older Diaclone and Microman ideas, it wasn't long before the Takara well started to run dry and Hasbro was forced to license models from other companies just to keep up with fans who couldn't get enough, supplementing this with its own designs from around 1986 onwards. Fortunately, Hasbro had a secret weapon ready to go and that year, *Transformers: The Movie* was released. Despite the film's modest success on the cinema circuit – reports suggest that it barely managed to break even, leading to several similar Hasbro movies being downscaled or scrapped – it still enjoyed twofold success as a great advert for both brand and characters, and something that would be far more greatly appreciated and enjoyed after the fact, not entirely unlike the original *Star Wars*.

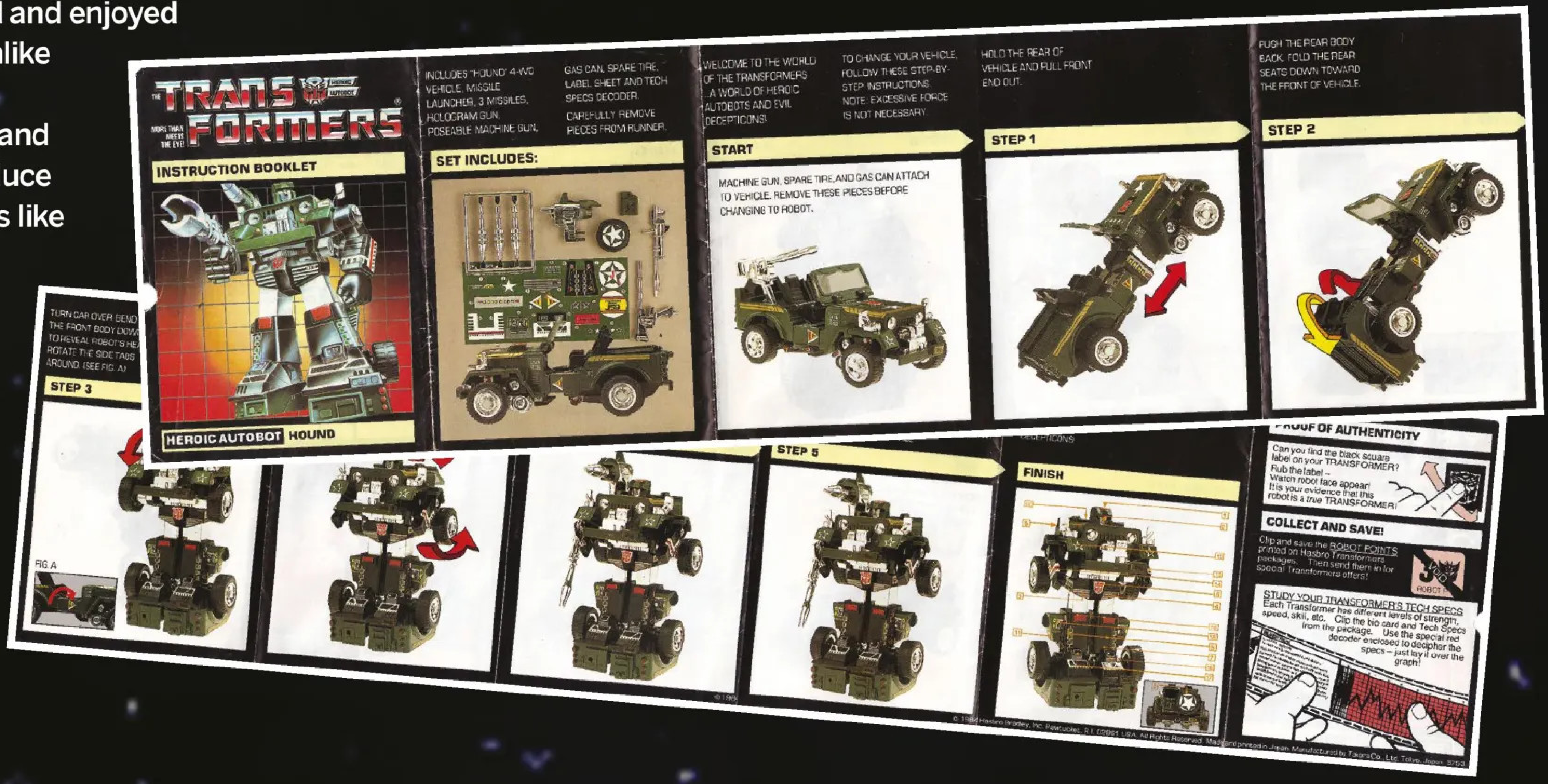
As well as new characters and toys, Hasbro could now produce reworked versions of classics like Optimus Prime and Hot Rod to appeal to the new generation of fans, as well as roping back in some of the earlier devotees. The franchise's explosive first few years would never be topped, however, and popularity wound down through the late '80s until the first wave of toys and media – Generation 1, as it is known – ended in the early '90s.

The hiatus was a short one, however, and the series has since attempted to find the Energon to return to its former glory. Numerous attempts have been made to date, with varying degrees of success – there's something intrinsically cool about toys designed so expertly that they can completely change forms, something that will likely always be able to capture the imagination of a curious child, and indeed some of the more elaborate later models still manage to amaze us adult-shaped children with their ingenious mechanisms.

While the series could be considered past its Prime today, we'll always have that first generation of toys, shows and memories, and we're unlikely to ever be allowed to forget it all – a lot of the most popular new figures and media are those that use Generation 1 as an inspiration, and it never fails to raise a smile for anyone old enough to remember holding their thumb on a panel to reveal an Autobot sigil, or using a piece of red film to 'decode' a secret message on the toys' packaging.

## COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

A good deal of the modern collectability of Transformers merchandise comes from the fact that its has been a formative part for people of all ages – while those who grew up ramming Starscream and Bumblebee figures into one another might not have been fans of things like the later Beast Wars series, you have to remember that kids that grew up with *that* era of Transformers are likely now old enough to be looking to relive their own childhoods by celebrating where the series began. There's also that incredible initial burst of popularity to consider, and it doesn't hurt Transformers like it does many similar toy-lines. In many cases, '80s action figures that were solid plastic with limited joints can often be found in


THE TRANSFORMERS
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE!
HEROIC AUTOBOT
FIG. A
VOID
ROBOT

INSTRUCTION BOOKLET

HEROIC AUTOBOT HOUND

INCLUDES "HOUND" 4-WD VEHICLE, MISSILE LAUNCHER, 3 MISSILES, HOLOGRAM GUN, POSEABLE MACHINE GUN, GAS CAN, SPARE TIRE, LABEL SHEET AND TECH SPECS DECODER.

CAREFULLY REMOVE PIECES FROM RUNNER.

SET INCLUDES:

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF THE TRANSFORMERS …A WORLD OF HEROIC AUTOBOTS AND EVIL DECEPTICONS!

TO CHANGE YOUR VEHICLE, FOLLOW THESE STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS. NOTE: EXCESSIVE FORCE IS NOT NECESSARY.

START

MACHINE GUN, SPARE TIRE, AND GAS CAN ATTACH TO VEHICLE. REMOVE THESE PIECES BEFORE CHANGING TO ROBOT.

HOLD THE REAR OF VEHICLE AND PULL FRONT END OUT.

STEP 1

PUSH THE REAR BODY BACK. FOLD THE REAR SEATS DOWN TOWARD THE FRONT OF VEHICLE.

STEP 2

TURN CAR OVER. BEND THE FRONT BODY DOWN TO REVEAL ROBOT'S HEAD. ROTATE THE SIDE TABS AROUND. (SEE FIG. A)

STEP 3

STEP 5

FINISH

PROOF OF AUTHENTICITY

Can you find the black square label on your TRANSFORMER? Rub the label – Watch robot face appear! It is your evidence that this robot is a *true* TRANSFORMER!

COLLECT AND SAVE!

Clip and save the ROBOT POINTS printed on Hasbro Transformers packages. Then send them in for special Transformers offers!

STUDY YOUR TRANSFORMER'S TECH SPECS

Each Transformer has different levels of strength, speed, skill, etc. Clip the bio card and Tech Specs from the package. Use the special red decoder enclosed to decipher the specs – just lay it over the graph!

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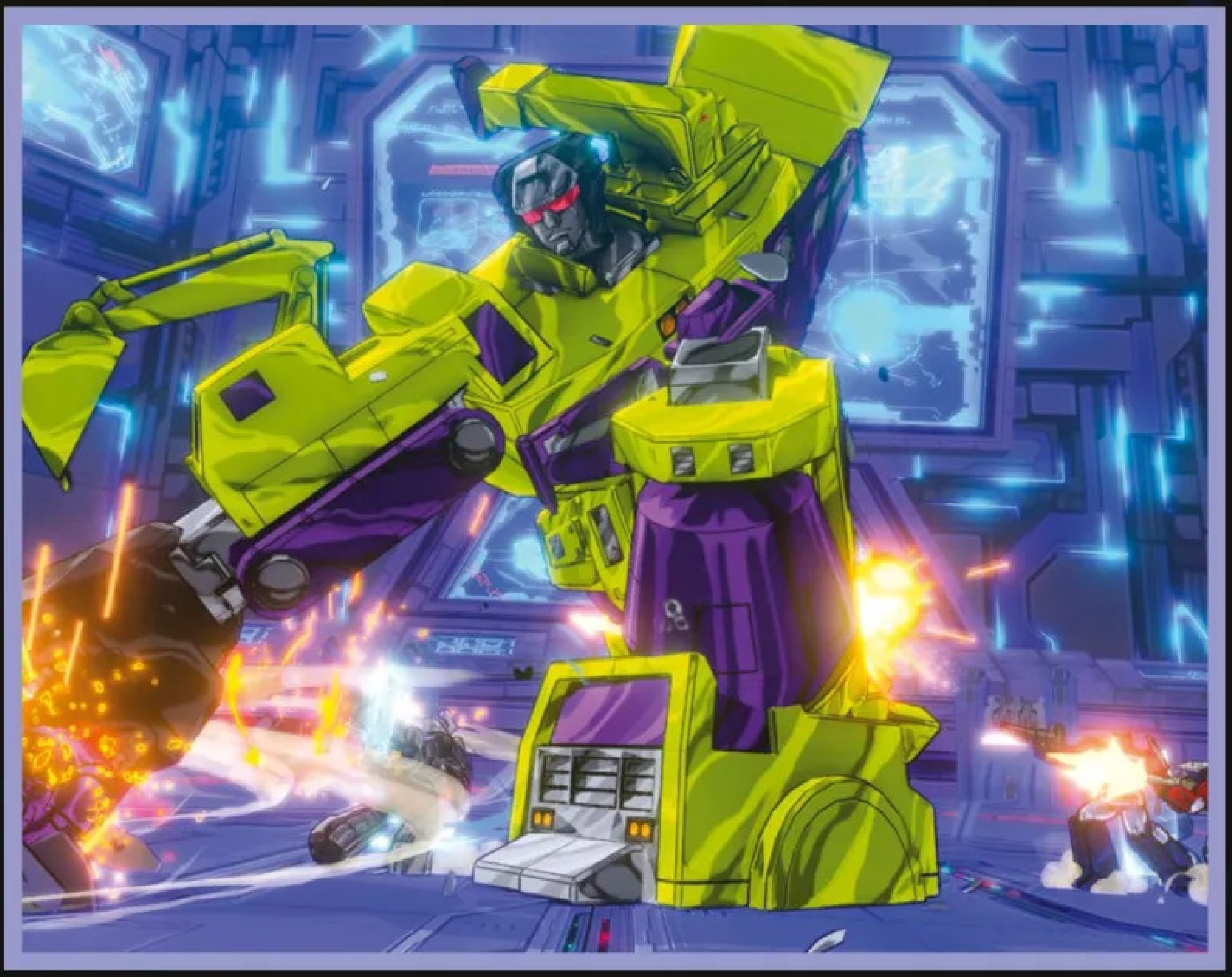
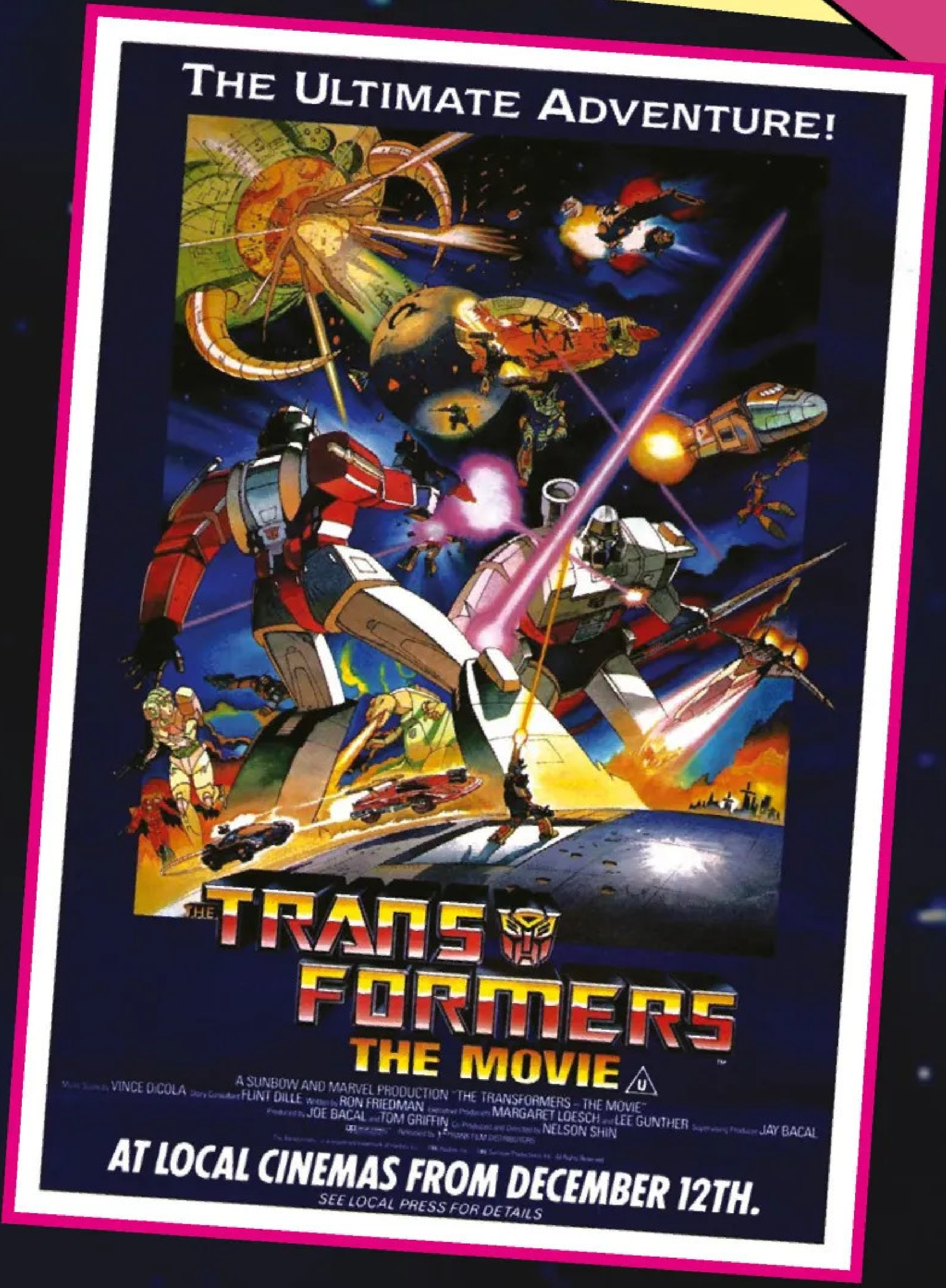


**Transformers Devastation**

It's amazing that there have been so few great Transformers videogames. Still, this 2015 release saw PlatinumGames turn its attention to the original series, lovingly replicating the style while letting you play out the kinds of battles against Soundwave and Megatron that used to exist only in your head. Oh, and the movie soundtrack is on Spotify, for the perfect accompaniment.

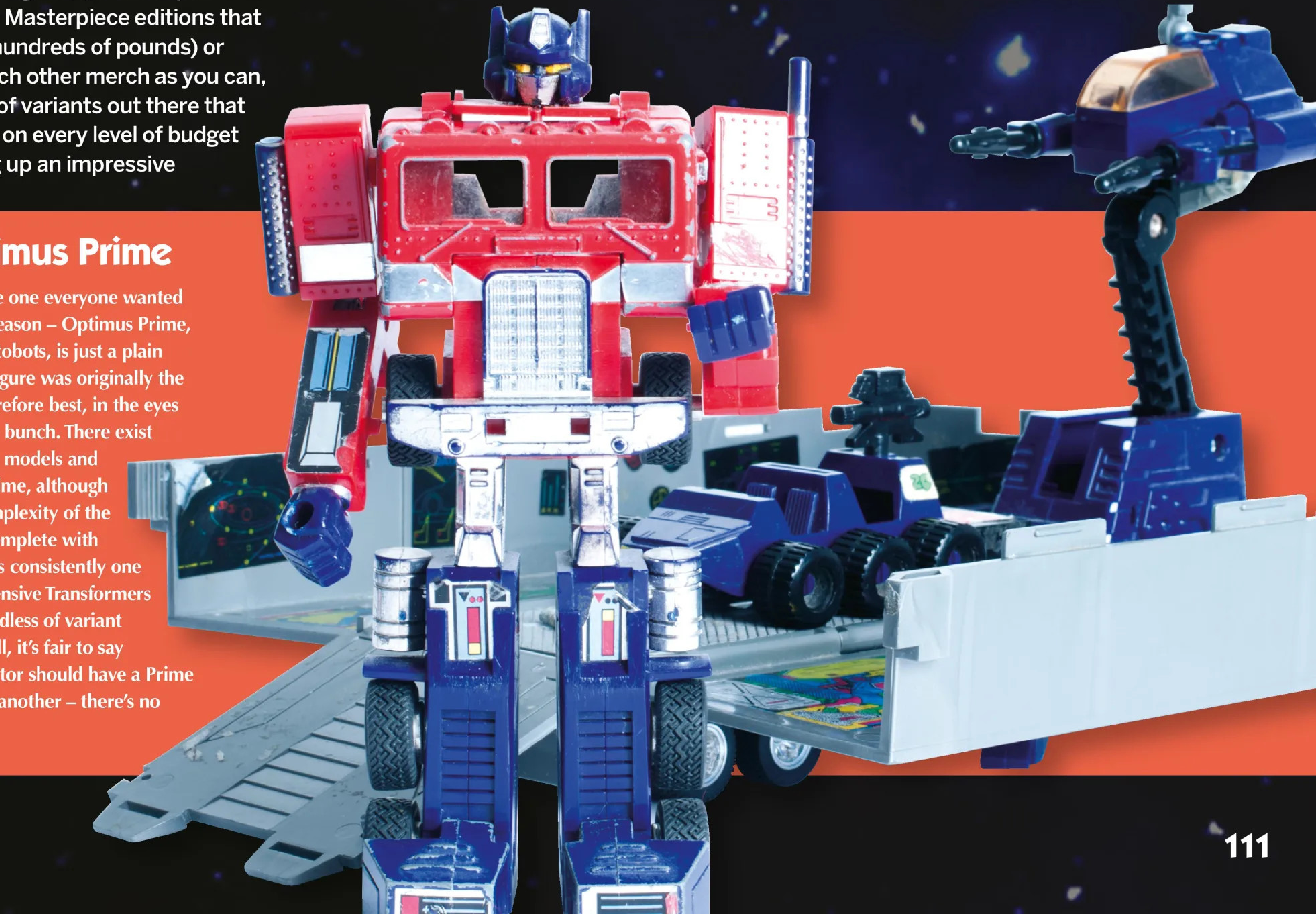
decent condition even today. By contrast, the myriad mechanical parts of most Transformers toys mean that any that were actually played with are much less likely to be found in functional form. Finally, there's the glamorisation of Generation 1 as the series' glory years, as evidenced by the frequent reboots and references to the time that the Transformers ruled the world. Put all of this together and that original Optimus Prime starts to look more appealing by the second.

There's also the fact that for fans of Transformers, there's just so much out there to collect. Whether you want to stockpile classic comics, load up a cabinet with the original figures (or the super-awesome metal Masterpiece editions that will run you up hundreds of pounds) or round up as much other merch as you can, there are loads of variants out there that allow collectors on every level of budget to start building up an impressive assortment of transforming goodness. For the most avid collectors, there's even the option to expand beyond Transformers-branded items – GoBots (later picked up by Hasbro and turned into an alternate Transformers universe), Diaclone and Microman figures related to early Transformers lines can still be found if you have the time, money and inclination to do so. There was even a super-limited run of Diaclone toys released in the US before they were picked up to be rebranded as Transformers. If you see something that looks like a knock-off, it's always best to double-check – these things could be worth silly money to the right collector.


THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE!
THE TRANSFORMERS THE MOVIE
A SUNBOW AND MARVEL PRODUCTION "THE TRANSFORMERS – THE MOVIE"
VINCE DiCOLA
FLINT DILLE
RON FRIEDMAN
JOE BACAL
TOM GRIFFIN
MARGARET LOESCH
LEE GUNTHER
NELSON SHIN
JAY BACAL
AT LOCAL CINEMAS FROM DECEMBER 12TH.
SEE LOCAL PRESS FOR DETAILS

**Transformers: The Movie**

No, not the recent quick-cut, ugly robot music videos – the 1986 animation. A cult classic despite being something of a box office bust, it's still very enjoyable today. Peter Cullen's commanding performance as Prime amid a star-studded cast (including Eric Idle, Leonard Nimoy and Orson Welles) and the soundtrack is incredible. You got the touch…



## G1 Optimus Prime

It was always the one everyone wanted and with good reason – Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots, is just a plain badass and his figure was originally the biggest (and therefore best, in the eyes of a child) of the bunch. There exist plenty of variant models and re-releases of Prime, although the size and complexity of the truck (usually complete with trailer) means it's consistently one of the most expensive Transformers to pick up, regardless of variant or condition. Still, it's fair to say that every collector should have a Prime of some kind or another – there's no excuse not to.

Despite the small size, the furniture in the Sylvanian world is immensely detailed. Many Japanese people excel at tiny, hand-crafted creations and Sylvanian Families is a perfect example of their eye for detail.

Sylvanian Families proved to be a big hit in the UK and it secured the 'Toy of the Year' award from British Assocation of Toy Retailers three years in a row. To date, it's still the only toy to have achieved that feat.

## Information

**Original manufacturer** Epoch
**First released** 1985
**Expect to pay** £15.99 (Cosy Cottage starter set)

In 1985, Japanese company Epoch had the smart idea of combining doll-houses with tiny, adorable animals. With the animals made of porcelain and the furniture crafted from wood, there was a detailed, intimate feel to the toys.

The toy-line was called Pleasant Friends of the Forest Epoch System Collection Animal Toy Sylvanian Families. When increasing sales saw the toys brought to American and European shores, the toy-line was (somewhat sensibly) renamed Sylvanian Families. While the miniature animal dolls saw the Sylvanian Families first find success, it was when the animated series was launched a few years later that they truly became a household name. Set in 1950s Britain, the stories centred on unhappy children who are transported to the Sylvanian world to fix their problems. The different animal families who live in Sylvanian world – such as the Wildwoods (rabbits), Evergreens (bears) and Thistlethorns (mice) – work together with the human children who arrive. For example, one episode sees Joey wanting to be wise to other children's tricks. When he's transported to the Sylvanian world, Joey helps the Wildwoods come up with a plan to stop the dastardly Packbat snatching their carrots. In another, wheelchair-bound Chrissie gets her wish to go on an adventure when she ends up in the Sylvanian world.

# SYLVANIAN FAMILIES

## THE LEGACY

Sylvanian Families remains popular in Japan. In recent years, there has been a Sylvanian Families amusement park, Sylvanian Families musicals, and dedicated stores. Epoch still sells Sylvanian Families toys in the UK through a recently opened UK branch of the company.

# TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

## Remembering how four half-shelled reptiles and a mutant rat rose from the sewers to cover the world in pepperoni pizza, nunchucks and gallons of green ooze

The 1980s were chock-full of memorable franchises, but only one dared to showcase a team of anthropomorphic, martial arts-inclined, half-shelled reptiles. Given their worldwide success, it's easy to forget that the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles had a rather humble rise from the proverbial radioactive ooze. Born from the minds of artists Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1983, the turtles began as a kind of goof between the two creators during a lighthearted brainstorming session. The new venture was meant to parody other popular comic franchises like Cerebus, Ronin, Daredevil and New Mutants – a canister of glowing goo accidentally breaks into a bowl of ectotherms, which promptly falls into the Manhattan sewer system. And so begins the tale of Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael, Michelangelo and their giant, mutant rat sensei, Splinter.

In 1984, once the independent project was complete, *TMNT* #1 debuted in a self-published, black and white (with red cover), rather mature, $1.50 single-issue comic by Kevin and Peter's newly minted Mirage Studio – a venture funded with a convenient $500 tax refund, Peter's $200 life savings and a generous $1,300 loan from Kevin's uncle. After ordering the first 3,000-copy print run, the duo smartly managed to place an eye-catching ad in industry insider publication *Comic Buyer's Guide*, and in very 'Heroes in a Half Shell' fashion, the comic quickly started to gain traction. By way of popular demand, a second issue was completed and published in 1985, and by 1986, TMNT had garnered licensing interest from a minuscule toy company in California called Playmates. Proper action figures were proposed, as well as a highly marketable, tie-in cartoon miniseries.

As the gritty comic books continued their meteoric rise in popularity, Playmates requested some age-appropriate changes for the toy line and TV show, mostly by way of memorable catchphrases to replace any swearing (think 'Turtle Power' and 'Cowabunga'), colour-coded face masks and costumes to differentiate the turtles, a strong emphasis on lighthearted humour, and the bizarre addition of a constant pizza craving. Also, in an effort to appease TV censors, the series' signature violence was notably curbed – the Foot Clan was transformed from warm-blooded

humans who could get seriously hurt to numb robots that lacked the ability to feel any real pain. Additionally, April O'Neil changed professions from a computer programmer to a news reporter, and in terms of sheer menace, Shredder was significantly toned down. Even though Peter has since expressed his disdain for the PG reimagining, this marketing-driven move more or less kick-started TMNT's rise to mainstream success, as the miniseries was subsequently expanded into a massively popular TV show and the toys acquired a flying-off-the-shelves life of their own.

## GOING GLOBAL

By 1987, the TV show had become syndicated, the lottery jackpot for any children's cartoon. This beneficial development, paired with the hugely successful action figure line, propelled what became colloquially known as Turtlemania. The insane pop culture phenomenon seemed to spread to every corner of the globe, seeing the four green heroes plastered on every conceivable piece of saleable merchandise – stickers, towels, snack pies, breakfast cereal, bedsheets, pyjamas, fruit snacks. Even pasta bore tubular 'Cowabunga' branding. We all went to at least two or three TMNT-themed birthday parties, didn't we? Every kid at school wore TMNT T-shirts, brought their sandwich in a TMNT lunchbox and, with TMNT-themed pencils, wrote funny notes to pass to friends. After-school hours were filled with watching the official cartoon and long sessions of TMNT videogames (once homework was finished, of course).

And on that note, who could forget the turtles' inevitable expansion into the interactive entertainment realm? It began with the notoriously difficult *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Ultra Games on the NES (oh, the electrified water level, how we loathe thee), followed soon by a pair of excellent arcade multiplayer beat-'em-ups: the classic *TMNT: The Arcade Game*, which was ported to the NES as *Turtles II: The Arcade Game*, and then a worthy follow-up with *Turtles in Time*, an amazing brawler ported to the SNES as *TMNT IV: Turtles in Time* and to the Mega Drive as a reworked port in *Hyperstone Heist*. Still, that's not even touching on all the interesting spin-offs on DOS PC (like the comic-centric *Manhattan Missions*), Game Boy, and the infamously bad Tiger handheld devices. Yet even with as many videogames that the turtles spawned, one could say that they didn't hit the pinnacle of franchise domination until Hollywood came calling, and come calling it did.

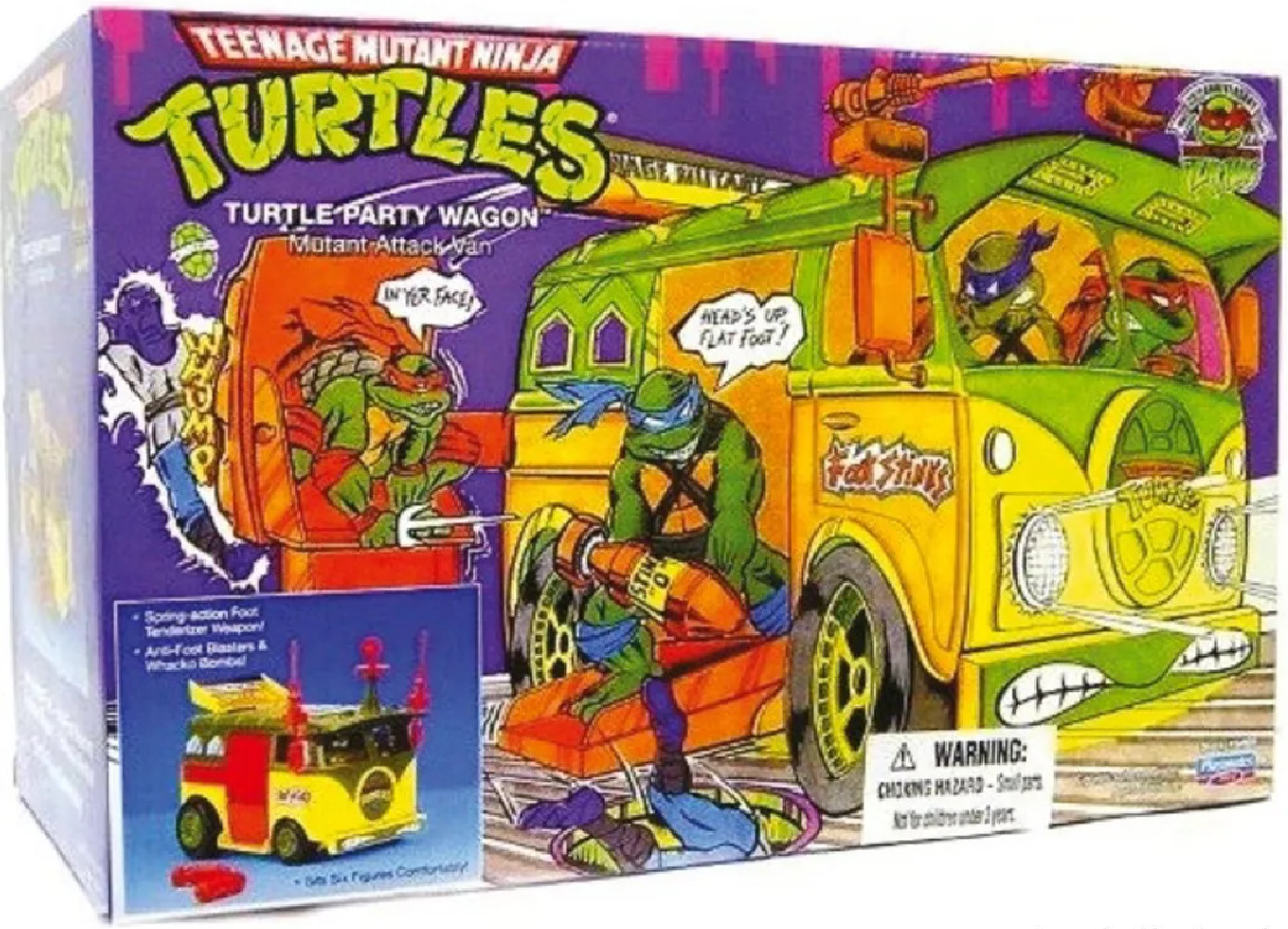
Once TMNT reached ultimate market saturation, it was only a matter of time before screenplays were written and the silver screen was, in turn, dripping with ooze. 1990 saw the release of the turtles' first feature-length film, a live-action movie showcasing advanced costumes created by Jim Henson's Creature Shop and voice-acting from notable

> **"Every kid at school wore TMNT T-shirts and brought their sandwich in a TMNT lunchbox"**

### Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time

Considered the ultimate multiplayer beat-'em-up in some circles, this port of the 1991 arcade game is fairly faithful to the original coin-op. Throw Foot Soldiers at the screen, jump into a wild time warp and guide the turtles through a smattering of historical stages, including prehistoric landscapes, pirate ships and futuristic hoverboard freeways. The SNES version sadly only supports two players simultaneously as opposed to the arcade's four, but it's still one of the best co-op experiences you can have. Plus it's not difficult to find and won't cost you an arm and a leg.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
KONAMI



The turtles' trusty get-around van, the Party Wagon features a spring-loaded Foot Tenderizer seat, Foot Finder radar blaster and turtle-green plated armour. Playmates put out the original toy in 1988, then re-released it decades later under the Classic Collection.

'80s stars like Corey Feldman. Following a massive box office success, especially for what was technically an independent film, a sequel followed by way of *Secret of the Ooze* in 1991, which would feature Vanilla Ice and his radical single 'Ninja Rap', a cassette on permanent repeat in every schoolkid's boombox. A third movie followed, but wasn't nearly as well received.

So really, what was truly fanning the TMNT fire? Could it have been the focus on martial arts, a subject that tapped into every little boy's innate desire to wield a katana and throw down a seriously sweet roundhouse kick? Or was it the imaginative characters, running the gamut from sentient, disembodied brain to a mutant manta ray and an interdimensional worm? Maybe it was simply that palpable sense of 'cool' the turtles emanated between high-threes and peanut butter and clam pizza binges. Michelangelo never had the best taste, but kids didn't seem to mind in the least, and the sales numbers didn't lie.

## COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Even in 2018, the turtles remain strong, though in terms of publishers and distributors, they have passed through several sets of hands. Nickelodeon acquired the rights in 2012 and created several fresh show seasons, forsaking traditional cell animation for a more contemporary CGI aesthetic. To the chagrin and delight of TMNT fans the world over, producer Michael Bay released two modern turtles movies, and Playmates, which still handles the toys, is still pumping out new action figures every year.

Perhaps that's why collectors are still fascinated with the franchise – these half-shelled heroes simply refuse to be relegated to the sewers of bygone obscurity. Due to TMNT's multiple decade run, the sheer variety of collectible pieces is overwhelming. While the ocean of TMNT memorabilia keeps deepening, vintage merchandise continues to go up in value, and there's really no shortage of holy grail pieces to pursue. Obscure carded figures like Hot Spot routinely sell for between $400 and $500, while the extremely sought-after Scratch is creeping into the $1,000 range for one in brand new, factory-sealed condition. Even more common toys, like the *Mighty Max*-esque Mini Mutants playsets, command significant prices.

If you're looking to start a TMNT collection without emptying the bank, there are toys on retail store shelves today, along with all manner of auxiliary merchandise, though these products do represent the modern reimagining of the turtles. But that brings up a question: Why is the TMNT collector's market still so vibrant? It could be an age factor: many mega-fans were kids in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and now they're adults with disposable incomes. It could also be the simple fact that because of the franchise's continual rebooting, there's a new wave of TMNT collectors entering the market every few years, making those eBay auctions ever more difficult to win. And that's really a testament to the characters' universal appeal. Regardless of the generations involved, these turtles continue to excite and enthral. So everyone now, young and old: Cowabunga!

# WE CALL IT ACCCIIIID

## A closer look at '80s acid house music and rave culture in the UK

Often described as a 'second summer of love', the '80s acid house scene only spanned a few years, but its impact was huge: it helped to define the era's youth culture and shaped the diverse music scene we have today. The genre's repetitive and utterly recognisable sound was a result of artists' experimentation with technology such as the Roland TB-303 bass synthesizer and TR-606 or TR-808 drum machines.

While these pieces of equipment were considered commercial failures by Roland, and were discontinued after just a couple of years, it was an affordable way for musicians to experiment with sound. Spanky, the late Earl Smith Jr, from the Chicago-based band Phuture, famously bought his 303 for just $40 from a second-hand shop.

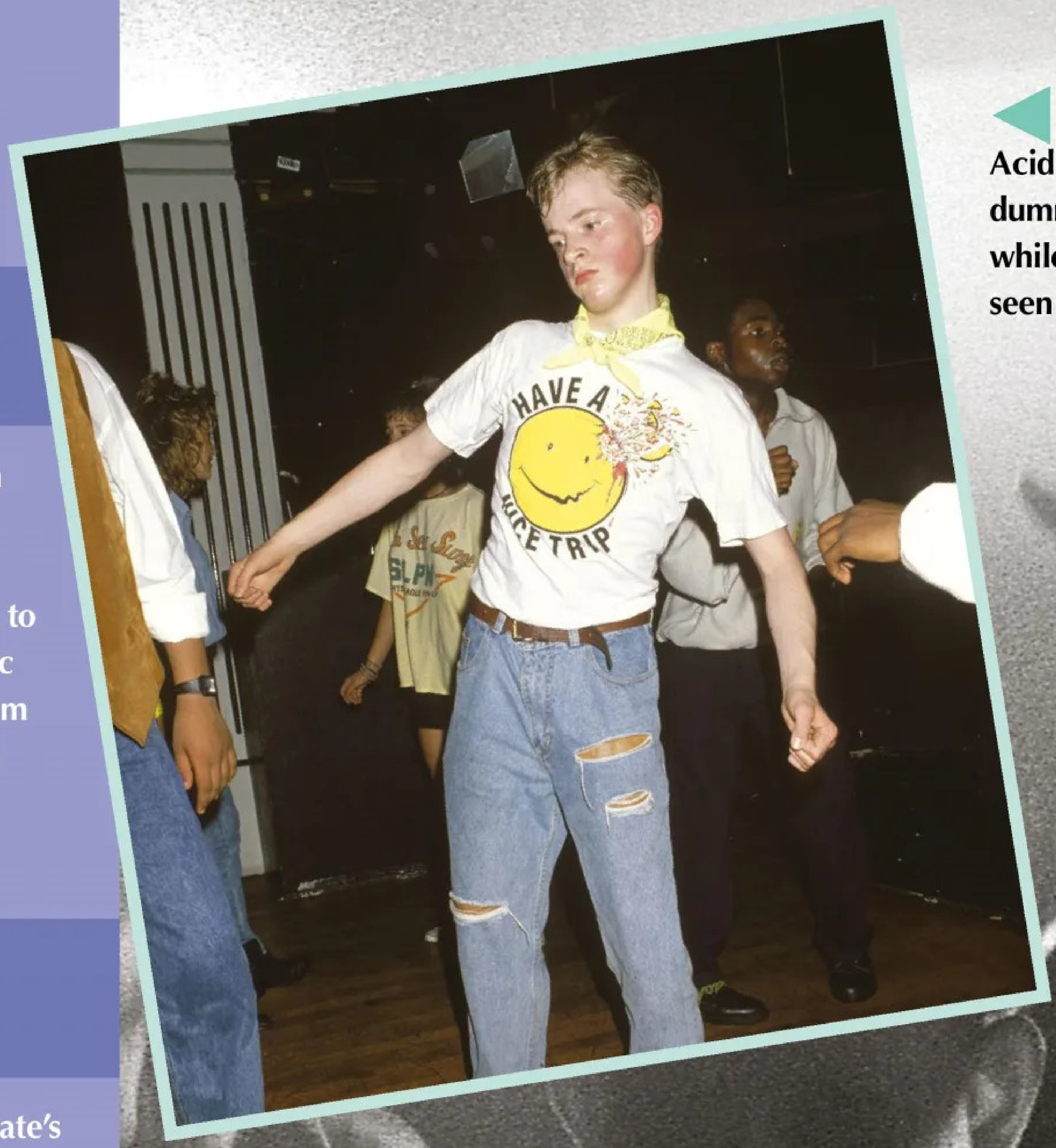
It was the same for UK artists, as Gerald Simpson, aka A Guy Called Gerald, explained in an interview with *The Guardian* back in 2015: "The house scene in Manchester at the time was really small, very specialist. The records were only coming in as imports from America and were pretty expensive. It was cheaper to make them yourself. I noticed there was a hypnotic element to playing the vocal line forwards and backwards at the same time – it played tricks on your ear…"

### LET'S TAKE A TRIP

While the Chicago acid house scene was prominent and is responsible for founding the movement (the 'house' part of the genre's name was derived from one of Chicago's famous clubs Warehouse, for example), it wasn't until DJs Paul Oakenfold, Danny Rampling, Nicky Holloway and Johnny Walker took their now-legendary trip to Ibiza and the open-air club Amnesia that it started to gain traction in the UK. The experience inspired them to keep the memory of their night alive by starting up their own club nights on home soil. Rampling and his then-wife Jenni set up Shoom; Oakenfold ran a weekly night called Spectrum at Heaven; Holloway created Trip at the Astoria. "The whole scene exploded within a matter of three or four months," explained Danny Rampling in a 2017 interview with *Rolling Stone*. "Word had got out. People cottoned on that there was something pretty amazing and revolutionary happening. The first night there was 100 people. Within two months, there was 300 people. And within month four there was about 1,000, 2,000, 3,000 people queuing to get into a small basement space."

> ***"It was only after DJs Paul Oakenfold, Danny Rampling, Nicky Holloway and Johnny Walker went to Ibiza that it started to gain traction in the UK"***

Flyers, zines, pirate radio and cassettes of live performances were all instrumental in helping publicise and increase the awareness of this burgeoning club scene. Shoom's use of commercial artist Harvey Ball's 1970s' smiley face, which became synonymous with the scene, helped secure its place in acid house history. As a weird piece of trivia, Ball originally got paid $45 to design the now-iconic symbol for the State Mutual Life Assurance Company, which he produced in about ten minutes. He never copyrighted it either, something –



Acid house accessories included dummies, dust masks and whistles, while the smiley face could also be seen almost everywhere.

according to his son, Charles – he never regretted not doing.

## CAN YOU PARTY?

Yet, while the smiley started out as a rather wholesome face encouraging us to 'have a nice day', its use for the acid house scene on stickers, posters, badges, T-shirts and drugs, symbolised rave culture and the various narcotics that could be found at them. While arguably drug use is often never too far away from any subculture, acid house and rave was slightly different in that its success was largely down to its unofficial partnership with recreational drugs. Rightly or wrongly, there's no denying raves would have been very different places without them. The result was a bunch of blissed-out, incredibly sweaty people busting their own moves on the dance floor and generally having a good time.

> ***"While drug use is often never too far away from any subculture, the success of acid house was largely down to its unofficial partnership with recreational drugs"***

It was so different to the nightclub culture that came before it that, naturally, the fashion started to adapt to reflect the new environment for the evening's activities. Trainers, dungarees, crazy psychedelic patterned clothing, boiler suits… basically anything that you could dance comfortably all night in. Team that with a dummy, Vicks VapoRub-covered disposable dust mask or a whistle and you were good to go!

The acid house scene spread quickly throughout the UK with DJs Mike Pickering and Jon DaSilva hosting an Ibiza night at Manchester's legendary Haçienda club in 1988. Since after-parties across the country were often subjected to police raids, illegal raves quickly gained popularity. Held in warehouses, abandoned buildings, fields… these pop-up parties were popular but it was a mission to keep the details out of the hands of the authorities who were working to shut them down. It's hard to remember a life before affordable touch-screen technology at your fingertips, yet the organisers of the raves relied heavily upon zines, pirate radio and the BT's voicebank system to reveal the secret locations at the last minute. The opening of the M25 orbital motorway also helped. Deemed 'the longest city bypass in

## 5 essential acid house records

**Record:** Voodoo Ray
**Artist:** A Guy Called Gerald
**Year:** 1989

A GUY CALLED GERALD
RX8804
Voodoo Ray (Remix) 6.20
SIDE ONE

Created by Gerald Simpson while he was still working at a well-known fast-food restaurant, *Voodoo Ray* got to Number 12 in the UK music charts. It sampled a clip from Derek and Clive where Peter Cook said "voodoo rage," but there wasn't enough memory in the sampler so it ended up as "voodoo ray."

**Record:** Pacific State
**Artist:** 808 State
**Year:** 1989

STATE
808
PACIFIC

*Pacific State*, one of 808 State's biggest hits, reached Number 10 in the charts back in 1989. Its almost-futuristic sound conjures up images of a rainforest on another planet: ideal for a rave, in our opinion. An accessible, laid-back acid track that even non-fans of the genre will recognise.

**Record:** Can You Party
**Artist:** Royal House
**Year:** 1988

IDLERS
ROYAL HOUSE
CAN YOU PARTY
SIDE A

If you're listening to this, it needs to be turned up LOUD. Todd Terry's, aka Royal House's, *Can You Party* is an acid anthem blending disco, hip hop and the much-loved Chicago sound. Hip hop fans will know it as a sample on *I'll House You* by the Jungle Brothers too.

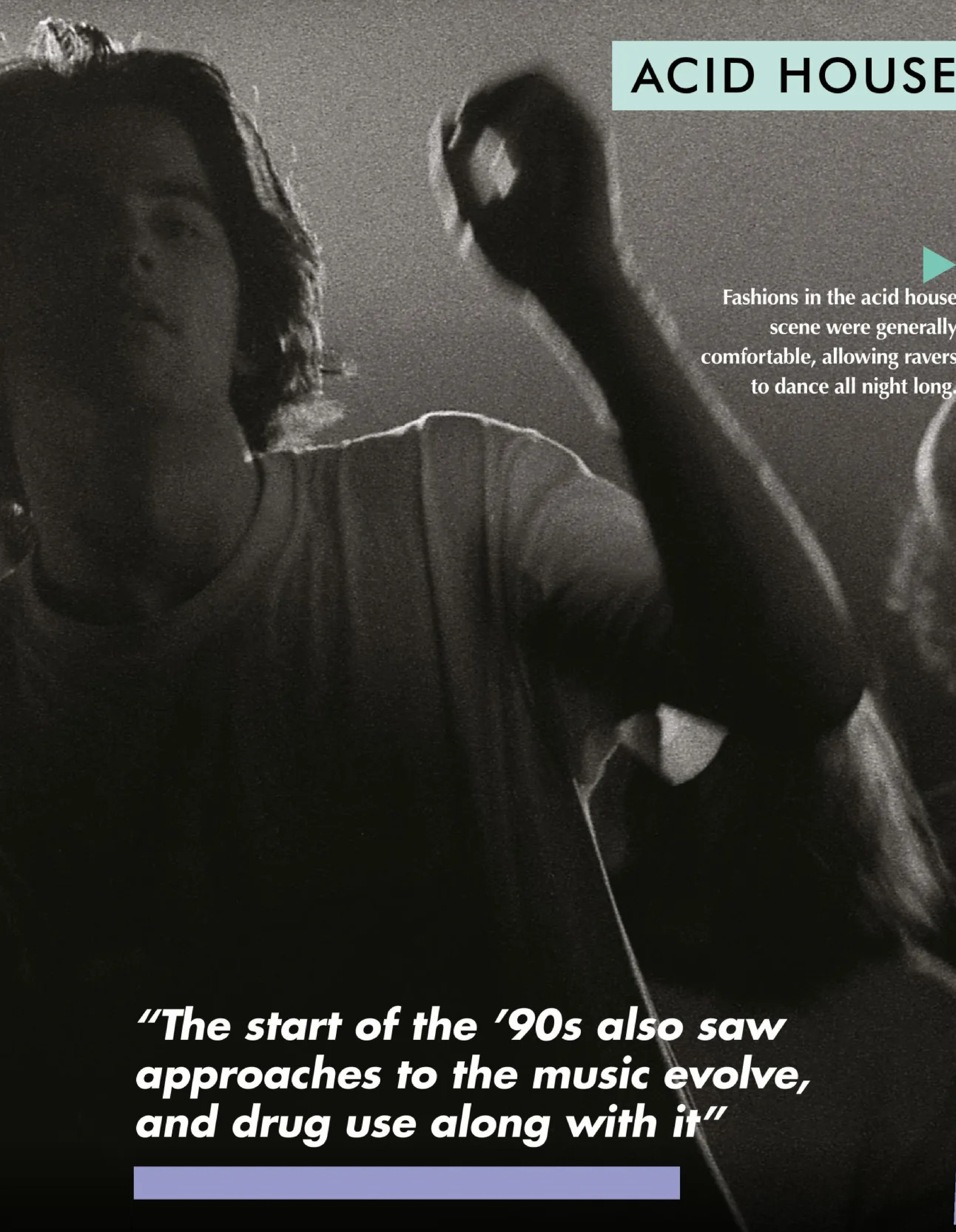
**Record:** French Kiss
**Artist:** Lil' Louis
**Year:** 1989

DIAMOND RECORDS
LIL LOUIS
This Side A
That Side B
French Kiss 10:02
New York 3:40
Wargames 7:16
Jupiter 5:20

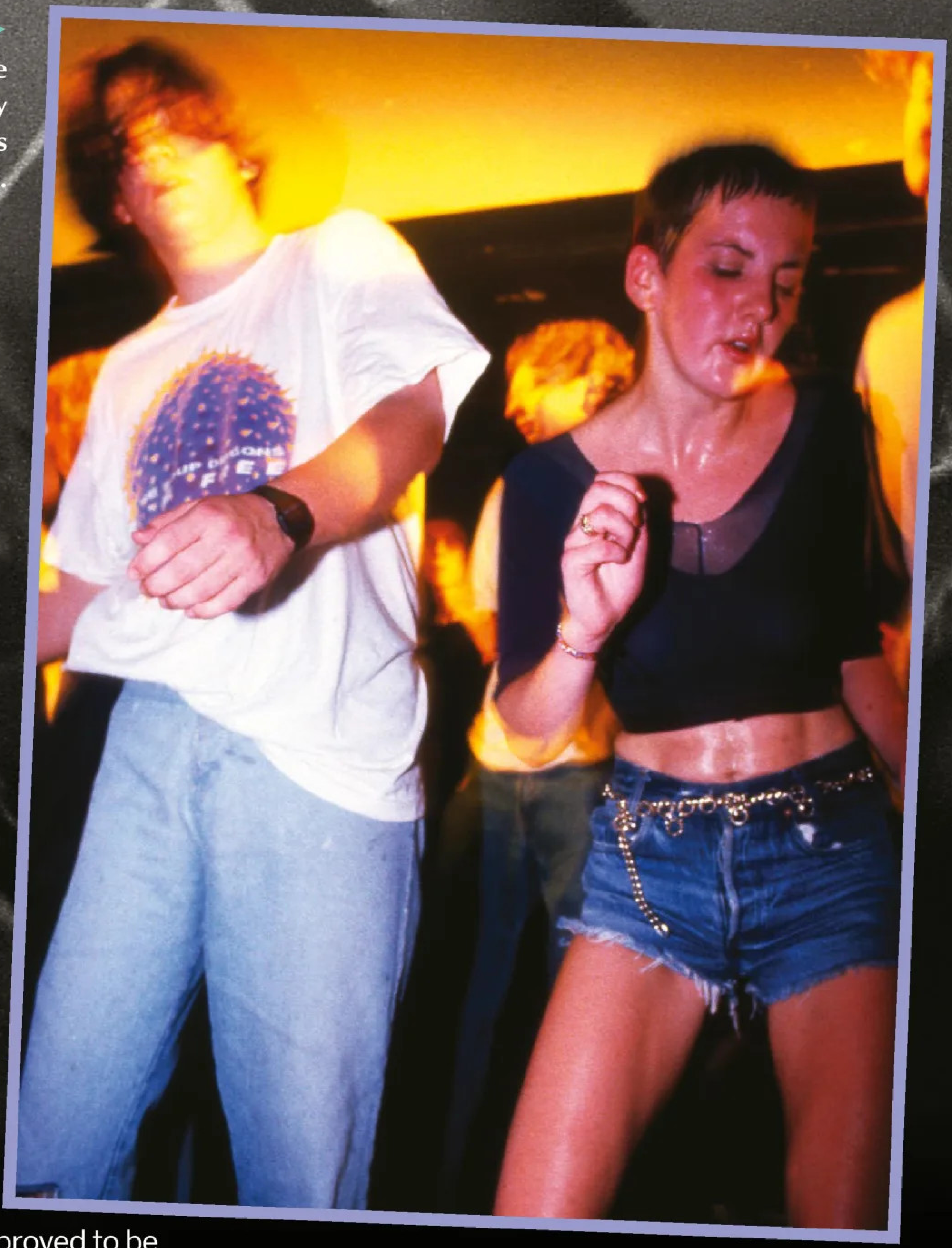
Chicago-born DJ Marvin Burns's (aka Lil' Louis's) track *French Kiss* is THE acid house track for many fans. It achieved commercial success at the time of release, and love for it has continued years later. Josh Wink sampled it for *How's Your Evening So Far?*, while Lil' Kim featured it in *Custom Made.*

**Record:** Where's Your Child?
**Artist:** Bam Bam
**Year:** 1988

Created by Bam Bam, aka Chris Westbrook, in the late-'80s, *Where's Your Child?* combines interesting vocals and samples such as glass breaking, gongs and more with the recognisable sounds of the 303 and 808. Classic acid, we're sure you'll agree.



Fashions in the acid house scene were generally comfortable, allowing ravers to dance all night long.



> *"The start of the '90s also saw approaches to the music evolve, and drug use along with it"*

the world' when it was completed in 1986, the M25 provided the means of accessing many of the illegal all-night parties in random locations outside of London.

Yet it was the mega rave, Tony Colston-Hayter's Apocalypse Now, that really brought acid house and rave culture into the mainstream view. In 1988, this commercial warehouse rave held at Wembley Studios was filmed by ITN. The result was mass outrage and panic, which was exploited by tabloid newspapers at the time.

## END OF AN ERA

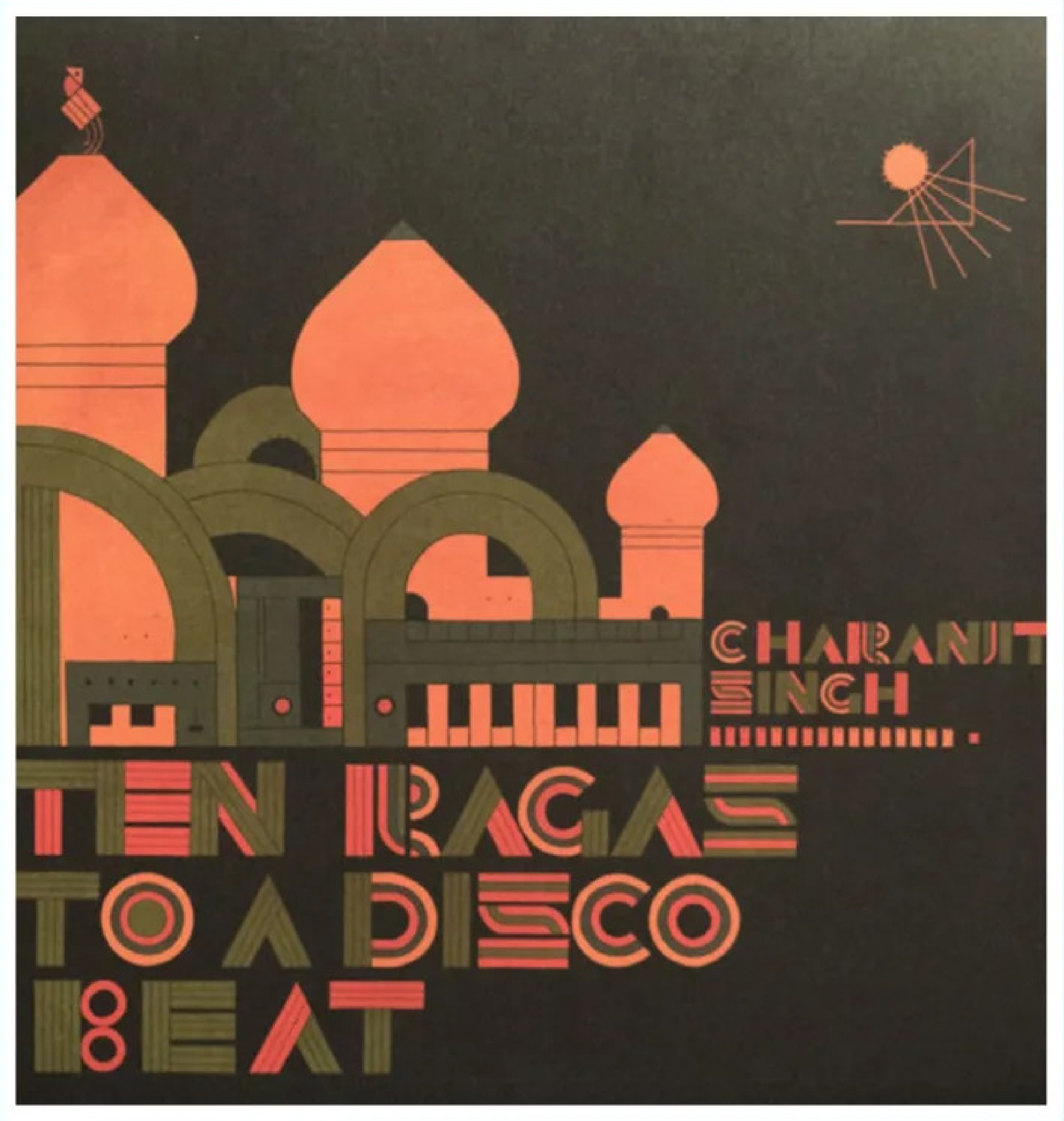
Outdoor commercial raves continued to be hosted by organisers such as Sunrise, Biology, Genesis'88, Energy and more. But, like all good things, they started to come to an end. Government legislation was created to crack down on illegal raves and free parties, issuing large fines on the organisers. The start of the '90s also saw approaches to the music evolve, and drug use along with it. Gone were the huggy, happy days of raves, replaced by more aggressive partygoers, prompted from the rise in cocaine use.

Nevertheless, acid house proved to be fertile ground for fresh talent emerging at the start of the next decade. Artists and bands such as Goldie, Orbital, Prodigy, Aphex Twin and lots more emerged, clearly influenced by the genre, but creatively expressing their own talent. This shift paved the way for new styles of electronic dance music: trance, gabba, breakbeat, hardcore, jungle, techno, trip hop and beyond. Further proof, as if it were needed, that it's an important subculture and genre in music history.

## Ten Ragas to a Disco Beat

**This little-known LP by Charanjit Singh is now thought to be the first ever acid house record. Discovered by chance by Edo Bouman while in a Delhi record shop in 2002, *Ten Ragas to a Disco Beat* predates Phuture's *Acid Trax* by five years.**

**Released by Singh, a talented Bollywood session musician, in 1982, the LP combines Indian classical music with the Roland Jupiter-8 keyboard, the TR-808 and a TB-303 to great effect. While it went unnoticed in the early '80s, its reissue in 2010 has since given it the recognition it deserves. There's no doubt *Ten Ragas* was well ahead of its time and is a vital part of the acid house story.**



# THE TRAP DOOR

## Information

**Manufacturer:** CMTB Animation
**First released:** 1984
**Expect to pay:** Available on Amazon Prime

Thanks to movies like *The Thing*, *Friday the 13th* and *Evil Dead*, horror was a booming business in the '80s. But its shock and gore meant only adults (and sneaky kids who could work a VHS) could indulge in the genre. What about kids who wanted the excitement and thrills of horror movies, but couldn't take part?

Claymation series *The Trap Door* had the answer, its cutesy take on monsters and ghouls bringing the creative scares of horror to a younger audience.

*Trap Door* centred around a giant blue creature called Bert, steward of a creepy castle with a trap door that he's warned not to open. Bert, being the simpleton that he is, often forgets the warnings and accidentally opens it, letting other monsters into the castle. There are yellow creatures that eat his breakfast, invisible things that cause mischief, and monsters that lay explosive eggs, among others. To get the monsters out of the castle, Bert has to team up with his friend Boni, the chattering talking skull, and his pet spider Drutt.

Even though *Trap Door* had monsters and peril, it was never really scary. The clay animation gave the series a cutesy look and Bert was above all a lovable and sweet character, while a strong streak of humour ran through its quick-fire episodes.

*Trap Door* struck the right chord between showing you the grotesque beasts and allowing you to use your imagination – what else was in the castle? What did the horrible Thing Upstairs look like? What, exactly, was under the Trap Door? Mysteries that still plague some of us to this day...

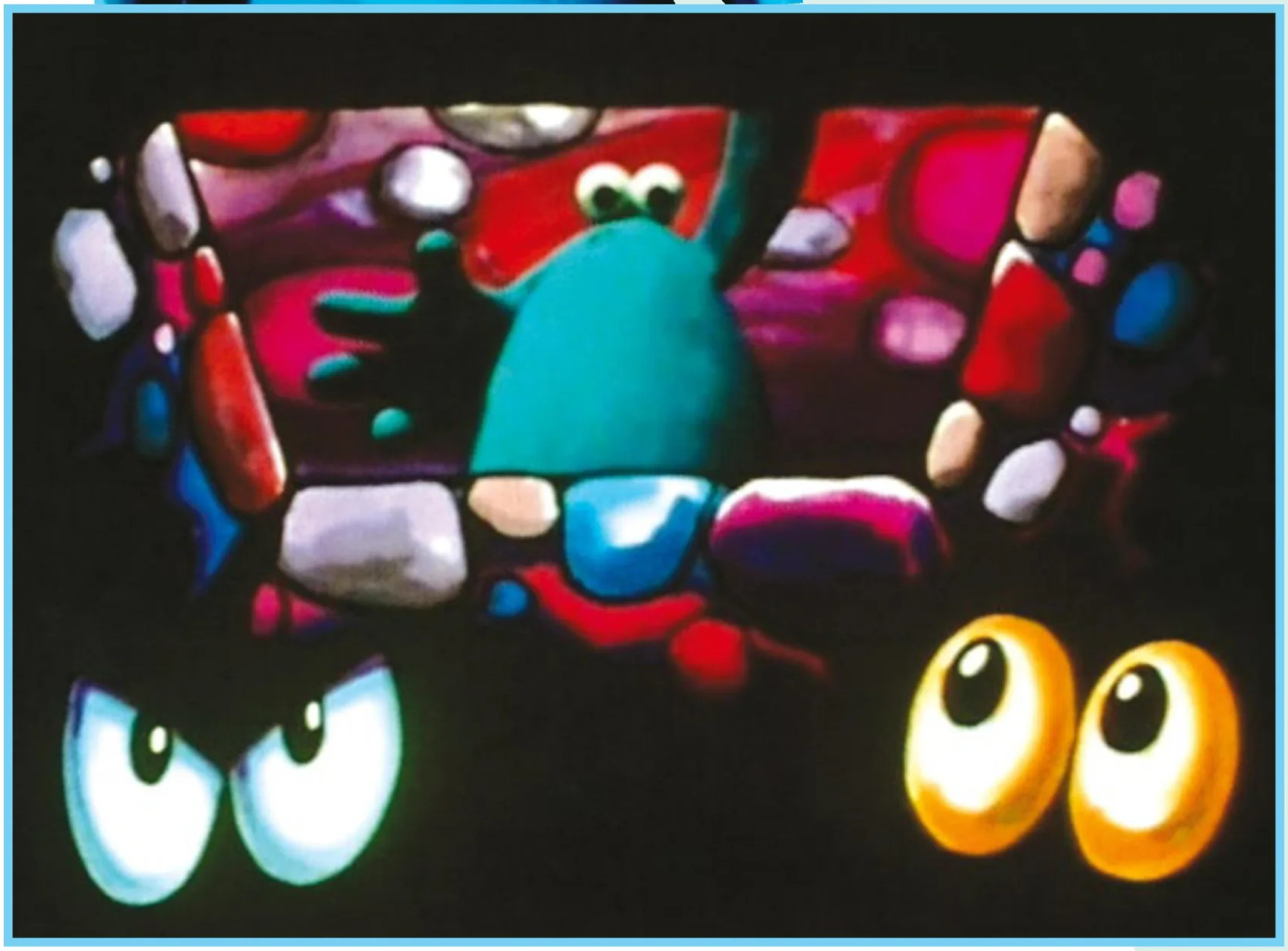
THE TRAP DOOR
SPECTRUM 48/128K LOAD ""
Piranha
© 1986 Macmillan Ltd. All rights reserved.
THE TRAP DOOR
© CMTB ANIMATION / QUEENSGATE PRODUCTIONS LIMITED
SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

"Don't you open that trap doooor!" The theme tune was catchy and memorable and, surprisingly, was written by Bob Heatlie, who also wrote Shakin' Stevens' 'Merry Christmas Everyone'.

The lovable Berk is the hero of *Trap Door* and can often be found crying "Oh Globbits!" or "Sniff that!" in his West Country accent. Episodes usually begin with him accidentally letting a monster into the castle.

## THE LEGACY

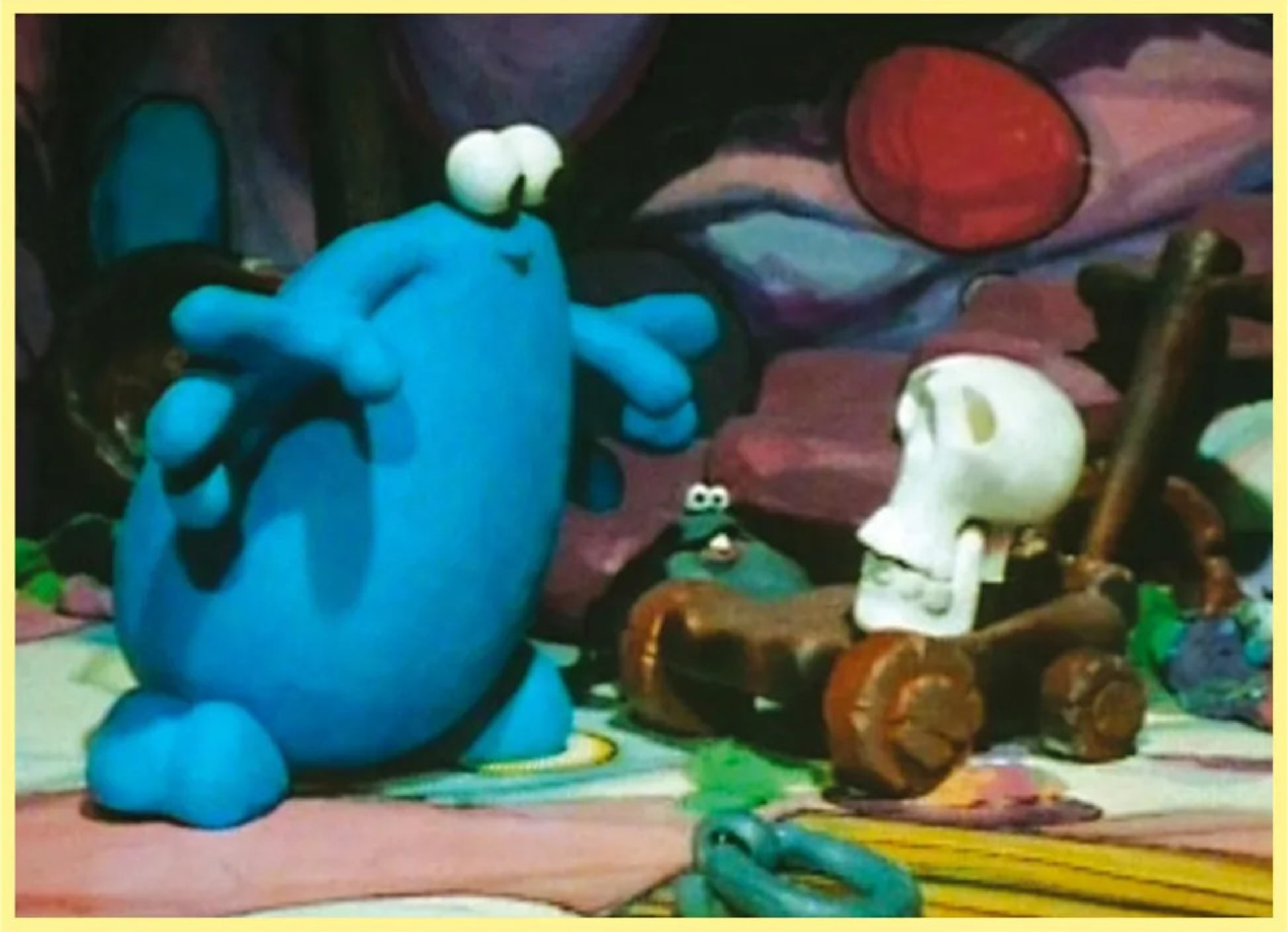
Co-creator Terry Brain used his experience on Trap Door to become one of the most important figures in Claymation. As an animator with Aardman Animations, Brain would work on *Chicken Run, Creature Comforts, Gogs,* and all the *Wallace and Gromit films.*

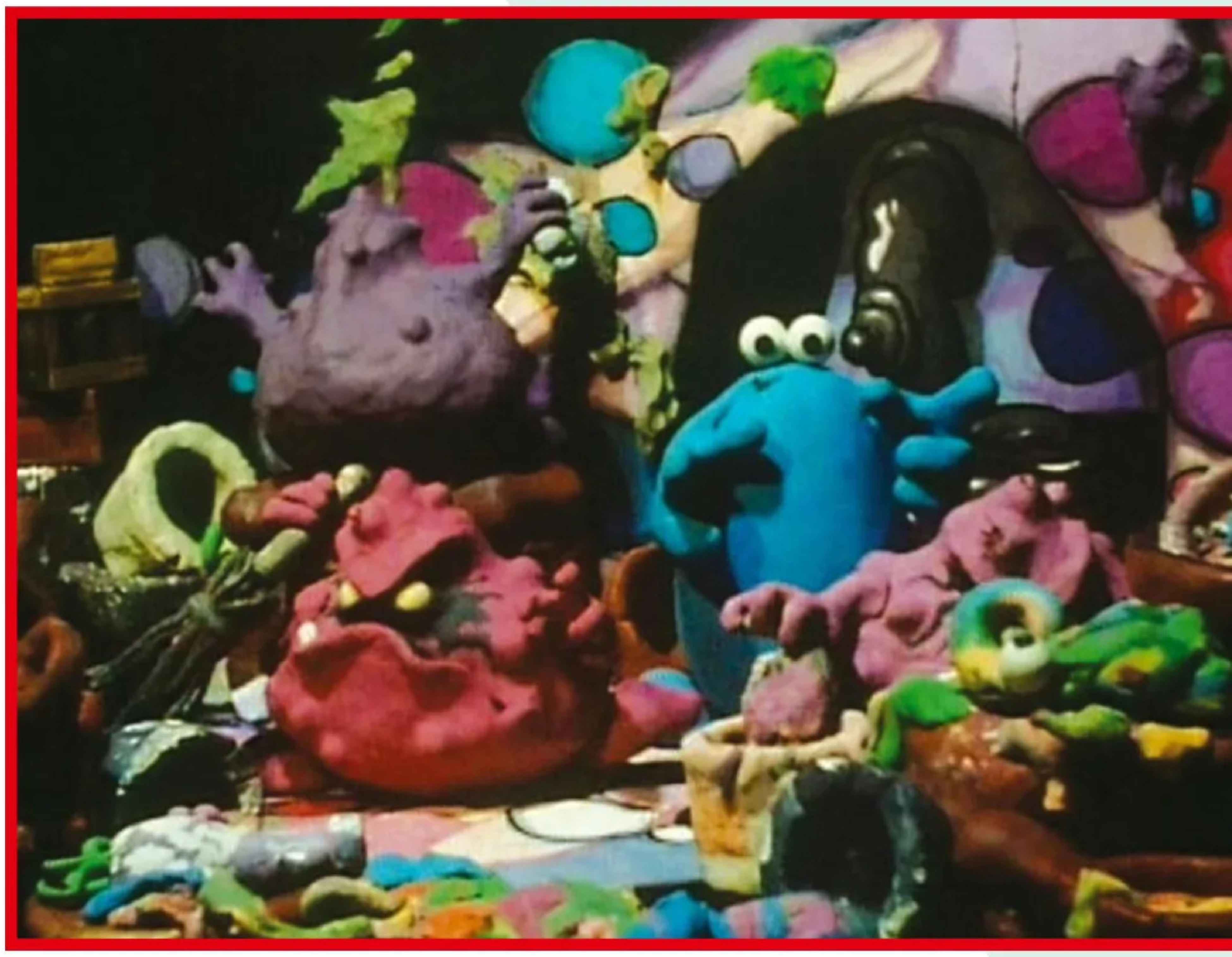


Away from television, Berk also starred in a couple of popular spin-off *Trap Door* games for the ZX Spectrum. With colourful visuals that stayed true to the show's trademark style, both are fondly remembered in their own right.

Each episode of *Trap Door* was short and sweet, running for just five minutes. A total of 40 episodes were made, spread out across two series in two years.

Bert's master is the menacing The Thing Upstairs, the master of the castle who is never seen. He's only ever described or glimpsed very briefly – we know he has three eyes, giant fangs and wings.





Topps
GARBAGE PAIL KIDS
STICKERS
24 STICKERS
See back panel for
GARBAGE PAIL KIDS
T-SHIRT and SWEATSHIRT OFFERS!
BASKET CASEY
HURT CURT
GARBAGE PAIL KIDS

# GARBAGE PAIL KIDS

Toy crazes can be based on almost anything, but it's rare for one toy craze to be based on another. The Garbage Pail Kids were the stars of a series of trading cards that drew inspiration from one of the biggest toy crazes of all time: the Cabbage Patch Kids.

Cartoonist Art Spiegelman (who later won a Pulitzer Prize for his graphic novel *Maus*) came up with the idea for the cards, which attracted kids thanks to a combination of gross names and tasteless artwork. The original Garbage Pail characters looked remarkably like the Cabbage Patch Kids, but instead of inhabiting a loving and wholesome world, they were depicted with deformities and injuries, and were known by names such as 'Heavin' Steven' (who was throwing up) and 'Ray Decay' (who was rotting his teeth with sweets).

The craze ran to 15 series of cards in the US, with many also being distributed around the world, and new series began to appear in 2003.

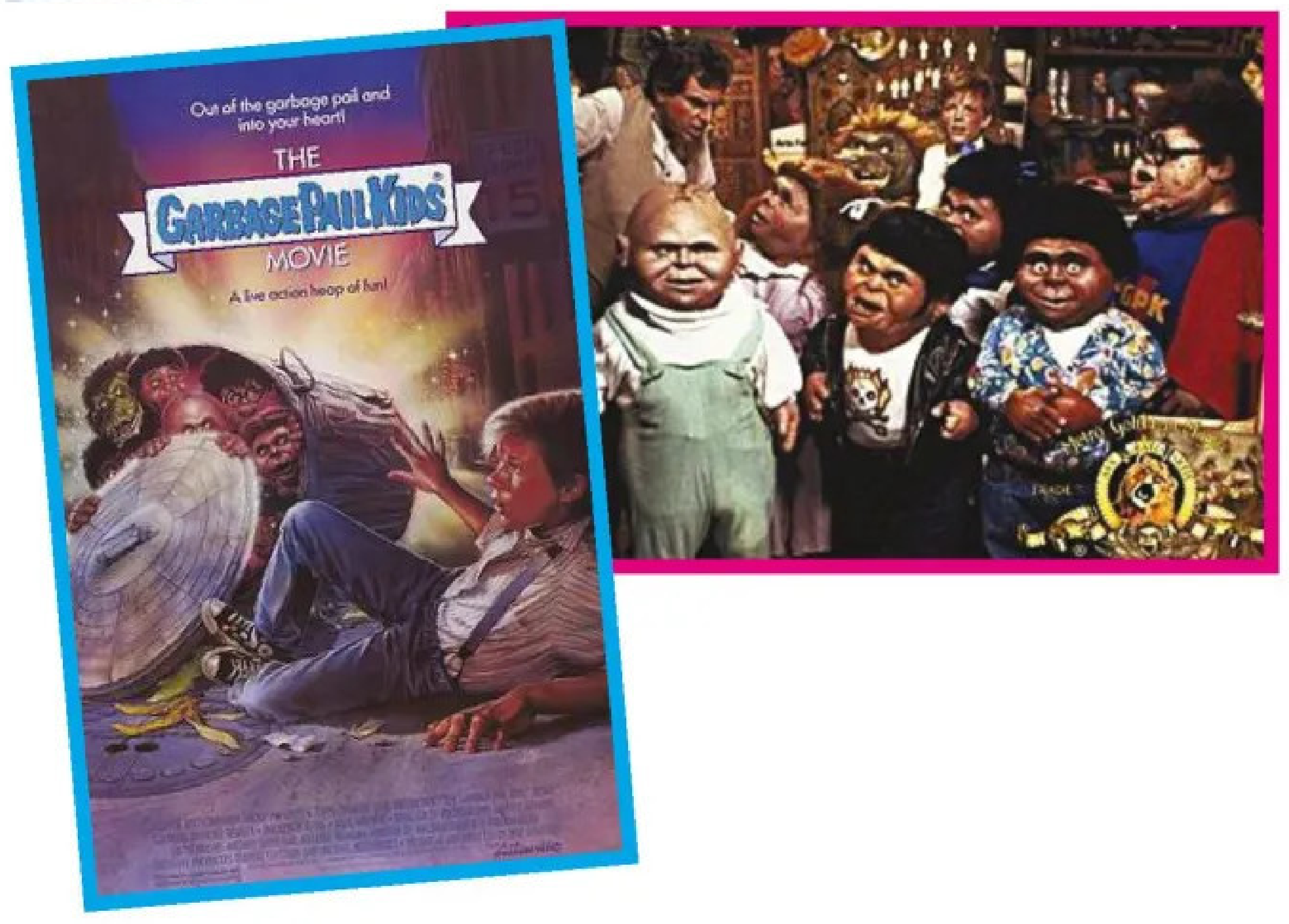
The cards ran into trouble at schools (which is something of a badge of honour in the toy world), where teachers disapproved of the cards changing hands during lessons. Many schools subsequently banned the cards altogether.

Also controversial was a cartoon show based on the cards. Produced in Canada in 1987, the 13-episode series ran into such a maelstrom of protest from parent groups that it never aired in the US, although UK viewers did manage to see it (and suffered no permanent damage).

WANTED
FOR PROHIBITING FREE SPEECH
LIBRARIAN
WANTED
FOR CREATING A PUBLIC NUISANCE
KID BROTHER
WANTED
FOR ILLEGAL ENT
DENTIST
WANTED
FOR INVASION OF PRIVACY
NEIGHBOR
WANTED
FOR NEEDLING PATIENTS (HA HA!)
SCHOOL NURSE

◄

Pre-dating the controversial cartoon series was a dreadful 1985 movie, which has attained cult status. Apparently believing they had made a 'proper' movie, Paramount produced a press pack, posters and even a movie magazine. The film can be tracked down (don't) on VHS tape and DVD.

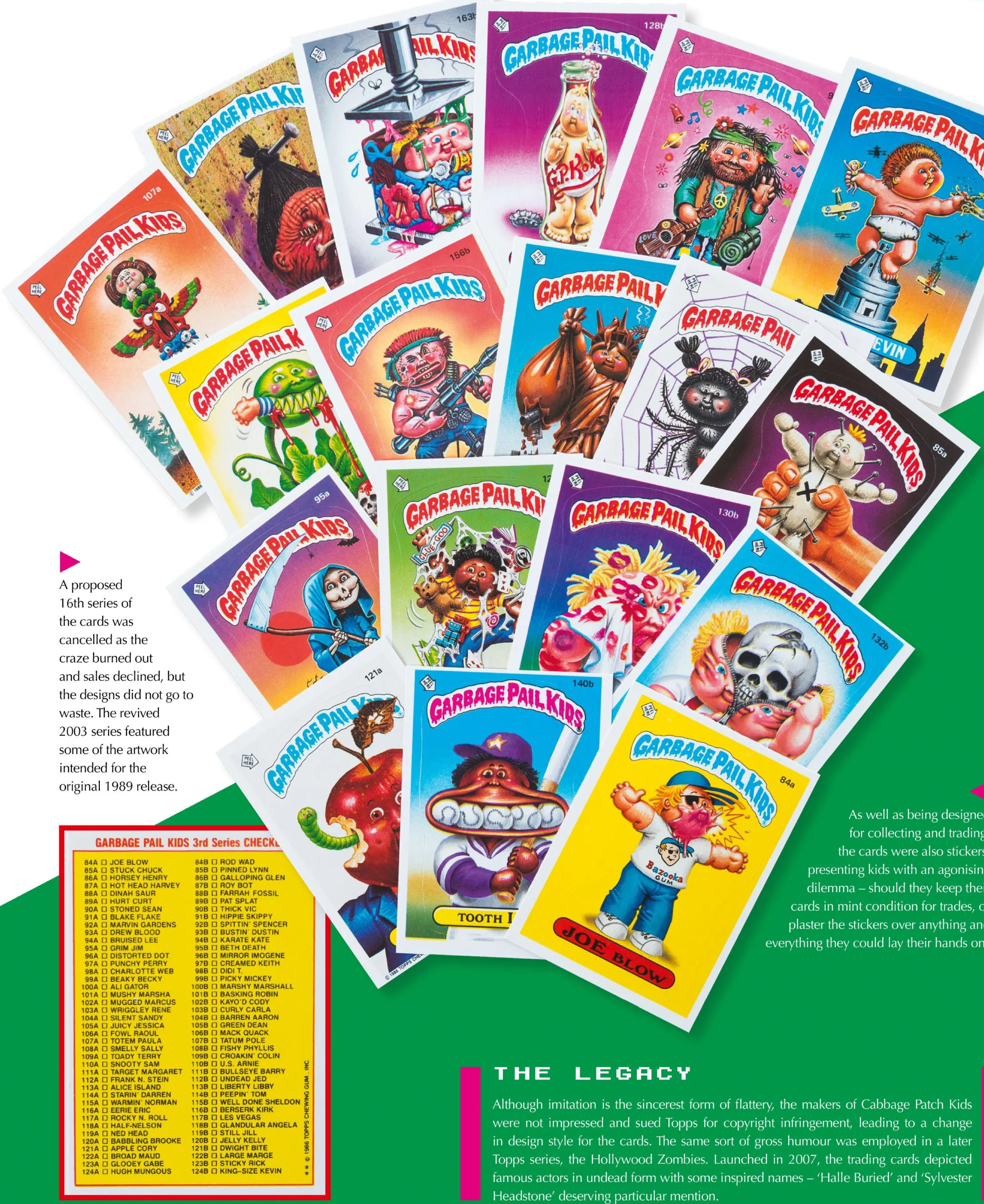

THE GARBAGE PAIL KIDS MOVIE

►

As well as the Original Series (OS) cards, the Garbage Pail Kids universe now includes the All-New, Flashback, Brand-New and Chrome Series, as well as one-off launches such as Magnets, Battle of the Bands, We Hate the '80s (we certainly don't endorse that sentiment) and several sets of online exclusives.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Topps
**First released:** 1985
**Expect to pay:** £3 (single card)



A proposed 16th series of the cards was cancelled as the craze burned out and sales declined, but the designs did not go to waste. The revived 2003 series featured some of the artwork intended for the original 1989 release.

As well as being designed for collecting and trading, the cards were also stickers, presenting kids with an agonising dilemma – should they keep their cards in mint condition for trades, or plaster the stickers over anything and everything they could lay their hands on?

GARBAGE PAIL KIDS 3rd Series CHECK

84A ☐ JOE BLOW
85A ☐ STUCK CHUCK
86A ☐ HORSEY HENRY
87A ☐ HOT HEAD HARVEY
88A ☐ DINAH SAUR
89A ☐ HURT CURT
90A ☐ STONED SEAN
91A ☐ BLAKE FLAKE
92A ☐ MARVIN GARDENS
93A ☐ DREW BLOOD
94A ☐ BRUISED LEE
95A ☐ GRIM JIM
96A ☐ DISTORTED DOT
97A ☐ PUNCHY PERRY
98A ☐ CHARLOTTE WEB
99A ☐ BEAKY BECKY
100A ☐ ALI GATOR
101A ☐ MUSHY MARSHA
102A ☐ MUGGED MARCUS
103A ☐ WRIGGLEY RENE
104A ☐ SILENT SANDY
105A ☐ JUICY JESSICA
106A ☐ FOWL RAOUL
107A ☐ TOTEM PAULA
108A ☐ SMELLY SALLY
109A ☐ TOADY TERRY
110A ☐ SNOOTY SAM
111A ☐ TARGET MARGARET
112A ☐ FRANK N. STEIN
113A ☐ ALICE ISLAND
114A ☐ STARIN' DARREN
115A ☐ WARMIN' NORMAN
116A ☐ EERIE ERIC
117A ☐ ROCKY N. ROLL
118A ☐ HALF-NELSON
119A ☐ NED HEAD
120A ☐ BABBLING BROOKE
121A ☐ APPLE CORY
122A ☐ BROAD MAUD
123A ☐ GLOOEY GABE
124A ☐ HUGH MUNGOUS

84B ☐ ROD WAD
85B ☐ PINNED LYNN
86B ☐ GALLOPING GLEN
87B ☐ ROY BOT
88B ☐ FARRAH FOSSIL
89B ☐ PAT SPLAT
90B ☐ THICK VIC
91B ☐ HIPPIE SKIPPY
92B ☐ SPITTIN' SPENCER
93B ☐ BUSTIN' DUSTIN
94B ☐ KARATE KATE
95B ☐ BETH DEATH
96B ☐ MIRROR IMOGENE
97B ☐ CREAMED KEITH
98B ☐ DIDI T.
99B ☐ PICKY MICKEY
100B ☐ MARSHY MARSHALL
101B ☐ BASKING ROBIN
102B ☐ KAYO'D CODY
103B ☐ CURLY CARLA
104B ☐ BARREN AARON
105B ☐ GREEN DEAN
106B ☐ MACK QUACK
107B ☐ TATUM POLE
108B ☐ FISHY PHYLLIS
109B ☐ CROAKIN' COLIN
110B ☐ U.S. ARNIE
111B ☐ BULLSEYE BARRY
112B ☐ UNDEAD JED
113B ☐ LIBERTY LIBBY
114B ☐ PEEPIN' TOM
115B ☐ WELL DONE SHELDON
116B ☐ BERSERK KIRK
117B ☐ LES VEGAS
118B ☐ GLANDULAR ANGELA
119B ☐ STILL JILL
120B ☐ JELLY KELLY
121B ☐ DWIGHT BITE
122B ☐ LARGE MARGE
123B ☐ STICKY RICK
124B ☐ KING-SIZE KEVIN

** © 1986 TOPPS CHEWING GUM., INC.

## THE LEGACY

Although imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the makers of Cabbage Patch Kids were not impressed and sued Topps for copyright infringement, leading to a change in design style for the cards. The same sort of gross humour was employed in a later Topps series, the Hollywood Zombies. Launched in 2007, the trading cards depicted famous actors in undead form with some inspired names – 'Halle Buried' and 'Sylvester Headstone' deserving particular mention.

# M.A.S.K.

Where G.I. Joe led, others followed. When it was proven that boys were willing to play with action figures, as long as they weren't called dolls, plenty of imitators sprung up to try and grab a slice of this new market. M.A.S.K. was one of the few that stuck, in part because it took a different approach to the idea.

The toy centred around the battle between the underground task force M.A.S.K. (Mobile Armored Strike Kommand) and a criminal group known as V.E.N.O.M. (Vicious Evil Network of Mayhem). What toymaker Kenner did differently with M.A.S.K. was immediately launch an animated series and comic books alongside the toys, with videogames following soon after. When M.A.S.K. launched in 1985, it was almost impossible to avoid.

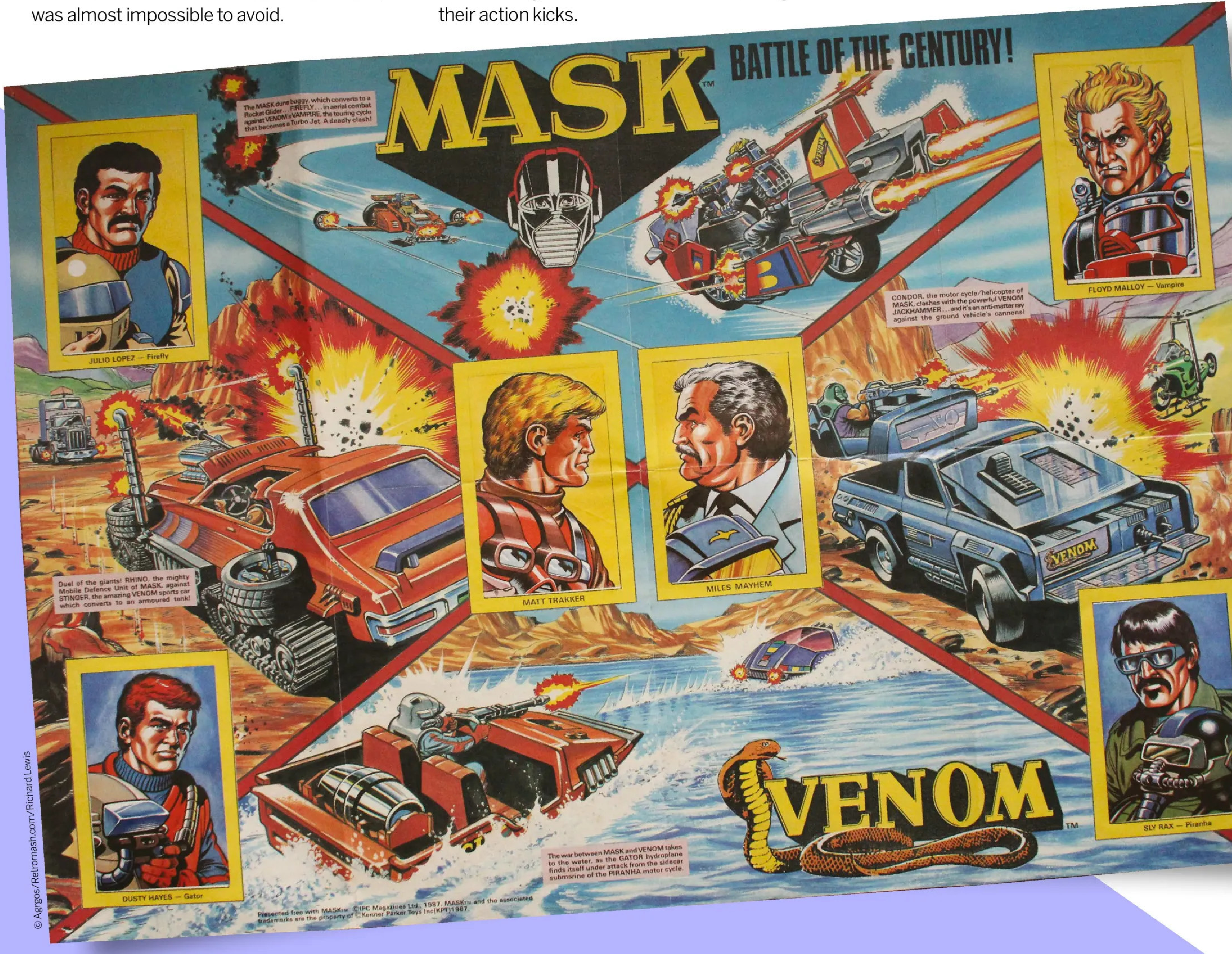
When M.A.S.K. members got the call, they'd put on their masks and get into their everyday vehicles, which would then transform into armoured combat machines. It was a clear nod to the success of then-rival Hasbro's Transformers, which was launched a year before M.A.S.K. – the M.A.S.K. Rhino even looked like Optimus Prime. Each member had their own speciality, from computer expert to weapons specialist and master of disguise.

The series then changed from crime-fighting to racing, while keeping the M.A.S.K. vs V.E.N.O.M. theme intact, before fading away altogether in 1988. But M.A.S.K. burned brightly before it flared out, leaving fans with many happy memories before eventually transitioning to G.I. Joe or Transformers to get their action kicks.

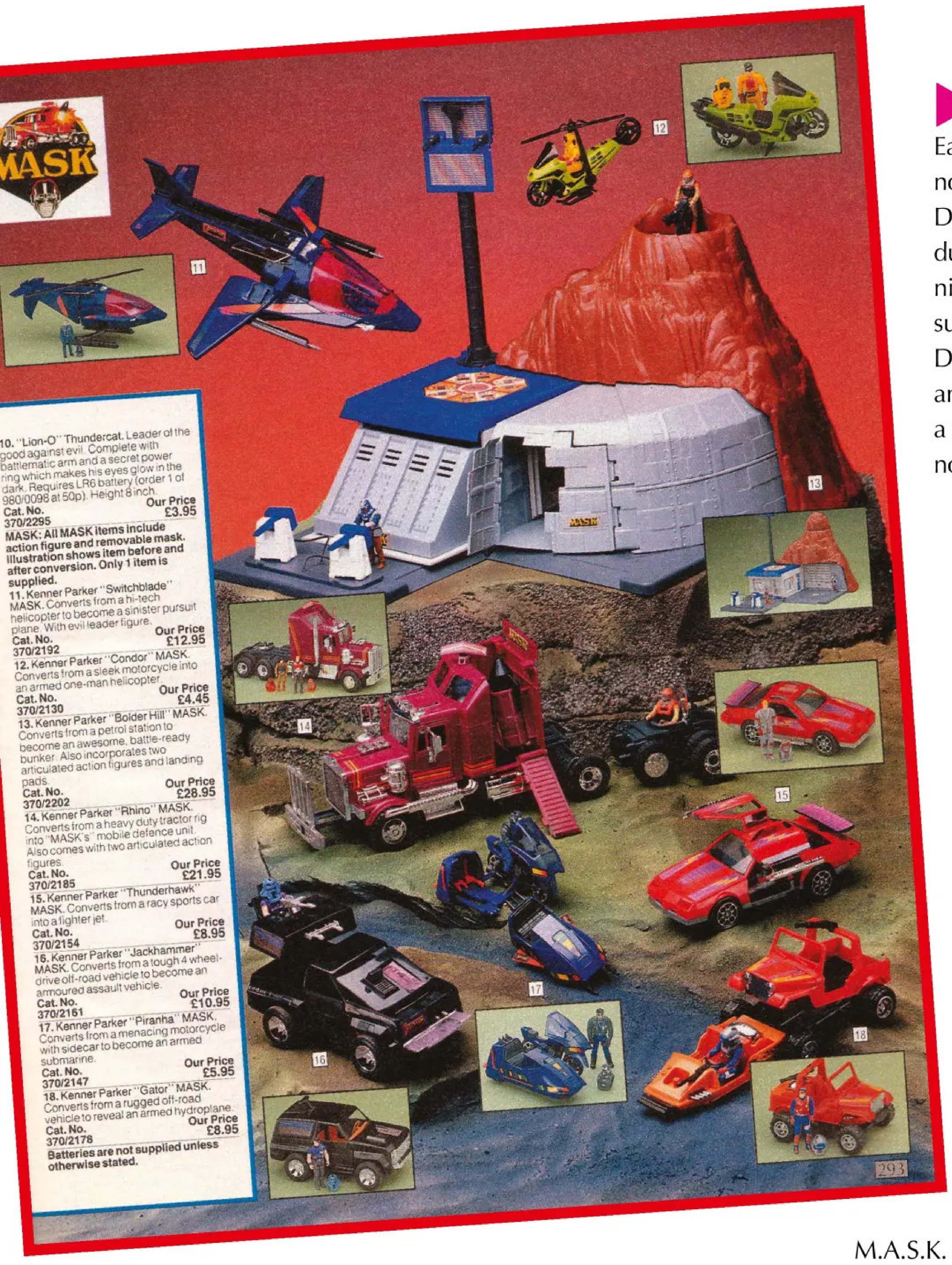
## Information

**Manufacturer:** Kenner
**First released:** 1985
**Expect to pay:** £11.99
(animated series on DVD)

The V.E.N.O.M. leader was Miles 'Wolf' Mayhem, who flies a helicopter that can transform into a jet plane and wears a mask that spits corrosive venom. In the comics, he steals half of M.A.S.K.'s headgear to start V.E.N.O.M., but in the cartoon, the origins of his crime force are left ambiguous.


MASK™
BATTLE OF THE CENTURY!
The MASK dune buggy, which converts to a Rocket Glider… FIREFLY… in aerial combat against VENOM's VAMPIRE, the touring cycle that becomes a Turbo Jet. A deadly clash!
FLOYD MALLOY — Vampire
JULIO LOPEZ — Firefly
CONDOR, the motor cycle/helicopter of MASK, clashes with the powerful VENOM JACKHAMMER… and it's an anti-matter ray against the ground vehicle's cannons!
VENOM
Duel of the giants! RHINO, the mighty Mobile Defence Unit of MASK, against STINGER, the amazing VENOM sports car which converts to an armoured tank!
MATT TRAKKER
MILES MAYHEM
DUSTY HAYES — Gator
SLY RAX — Piranha
VENOM™
The war between MASK and VENOM takes to the water, as the GATOR hydroplane finds itself under attack from the sidecar submarine of the PIRANHA motor cycle.
Presented free with MASK™ ©IPC Magazines Ltd., 1987. MASK™ and the associated trademarks are the property of ©Kenner Parker Toys Inc(KPT)1987.

© Agrgos/Retromash.com/Richard Lewis


MASK
11
12
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16
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18
293

10. "Lion-O" Thundercat. Leader of the good against evil. Complete with battlematic arm and a secret power ring which makes his eyes glow in the dark. Requires LR6 battery (order 1 of 980/0098 at 50p). Height 8 inch.
**Cat. No. 370/2295** **Our Price £3.95**

**MASK: All MASK items include action figure and removable mask. Illustration shows item before and after conversion. Only 1 item is supplied.**

**11. Kenner Parker "Switchblade"** MASK. Converts from a hi-tech helicopter to become a sinister pursuit plane. With evil leader figure.
**Cat. No. 370/2192** **Our Price £12.95**

**12. Kenner Parker "Condor" MASK.** Converts from a sleek motorcycle into an armed one-man helicopter.
**Cat. No. 370/2130** **Our Price £4.45**

**13. Kenner Parker "Bolder Hill" MASK.** Converts from a petrol station to become an awesome, battle-ready bunker. Also incorporates two articulated action figures and landing pads.
**Cat. No. 370/2202** **Our Price £28.95**

**14. Kenner Parker "Rhino" MASK.** Converts from a heavy duty tractor rig into "MASK's" mobile defence unit. Also comes with two articulated action figures.
**Cat. No. 370/2185** **Our Price £21.95**

**15. Kenner Parker "Thunderhawk"** MASK. Converts from a racy sports car into a fighter jet.
**Cat. No. 370/2154** **Our Price £8.95**

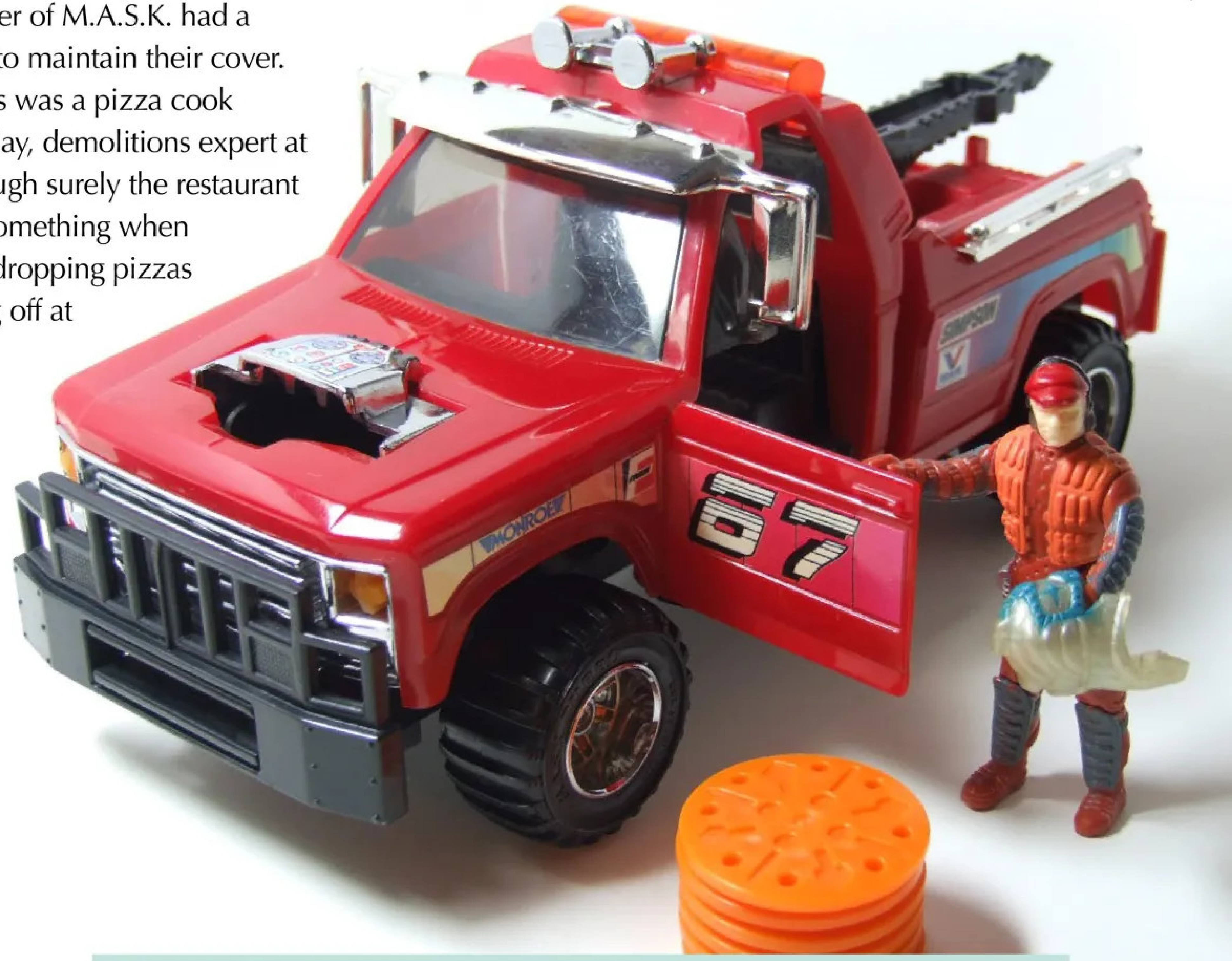
**16. Kenner Parker "Jackhammer"** MASK. Converts from a tough 4 wheel-drive off-road vehicle to become an armoured assault vehicle.
**Cat. No. 370/2161** **Our Price £10.95**

**17. Kenner Parker "Piranha" MASK.** Converts from a menacing motorcycle with sidecar to become an armed submarine.
**Cat. No. 370/2147** **Our Price £5.95**

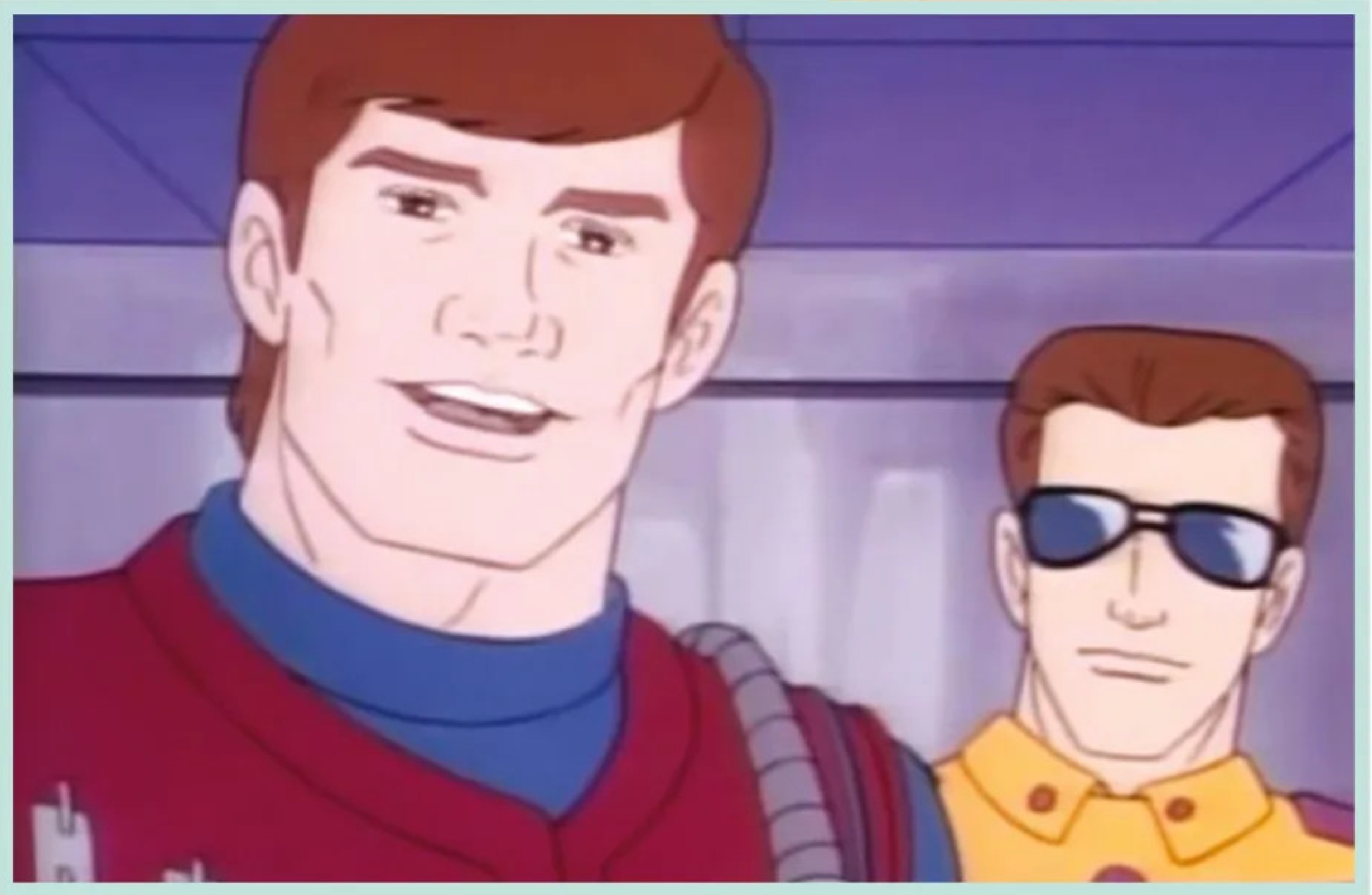
**18. Kenner Parker "Gator" MASK.** Converts from a rugged off-road vehicle to reveal an armed hydroplane.
**Cat. No. 370/2178** **Our Price £8.95**

**Batteries are not supplied unless otherwise stated.**

M.A.S.K.'s base was the home of multi-millionaire philanthropist and leader Matt Trakker. M.A.S.K. members were normal people until they put on the mask and got in their codename vehicles, which made them easier to relate to than, say, Transformers.



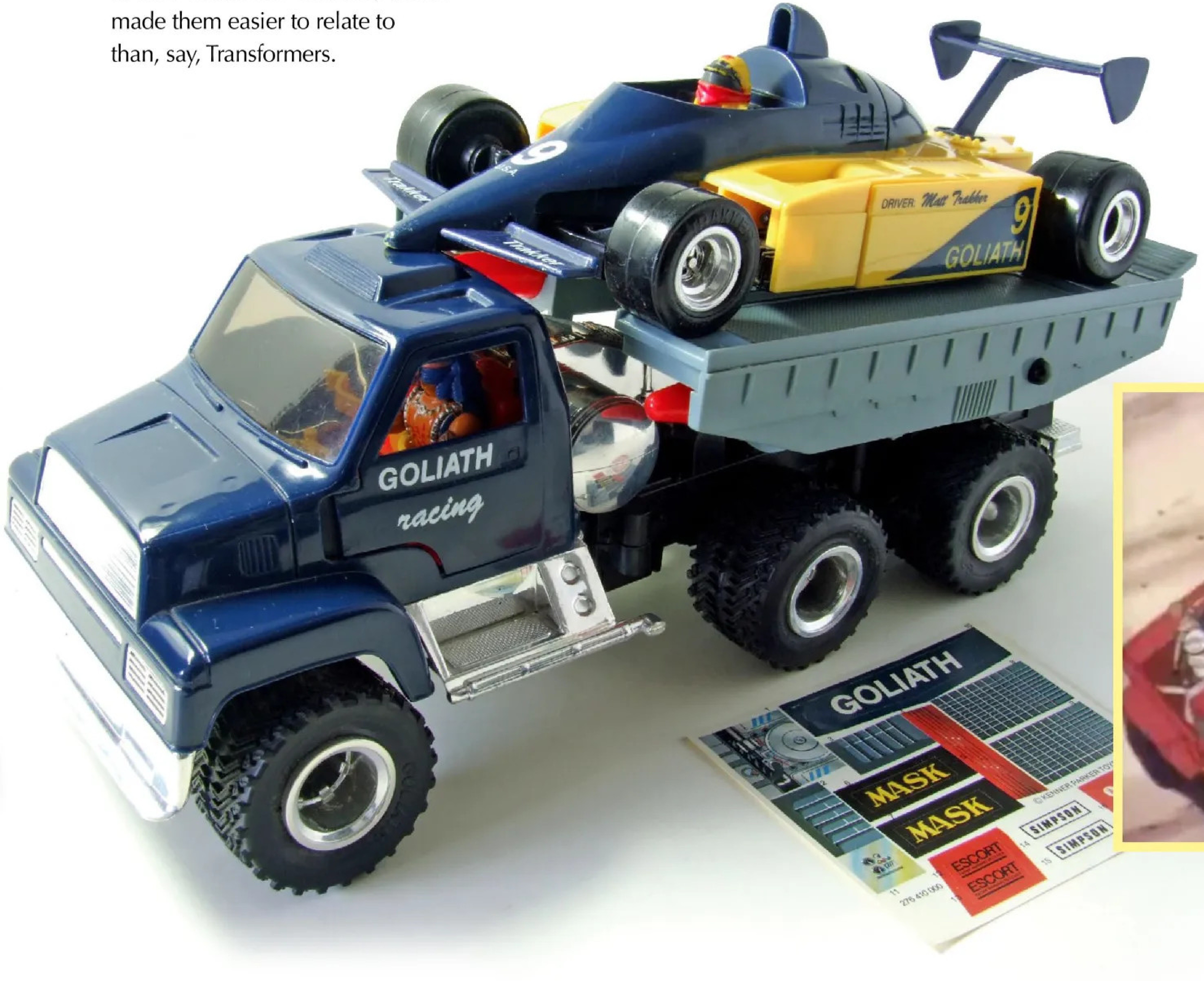
Each member of M.A.S.K. had a normal job to maintain their cover. Dusty Hayes was a pizza cook during the day, demolitions expert at night (although surely the restaurant suspected something when Dusty kept dropping pizzas and running off at a moment's notice?).

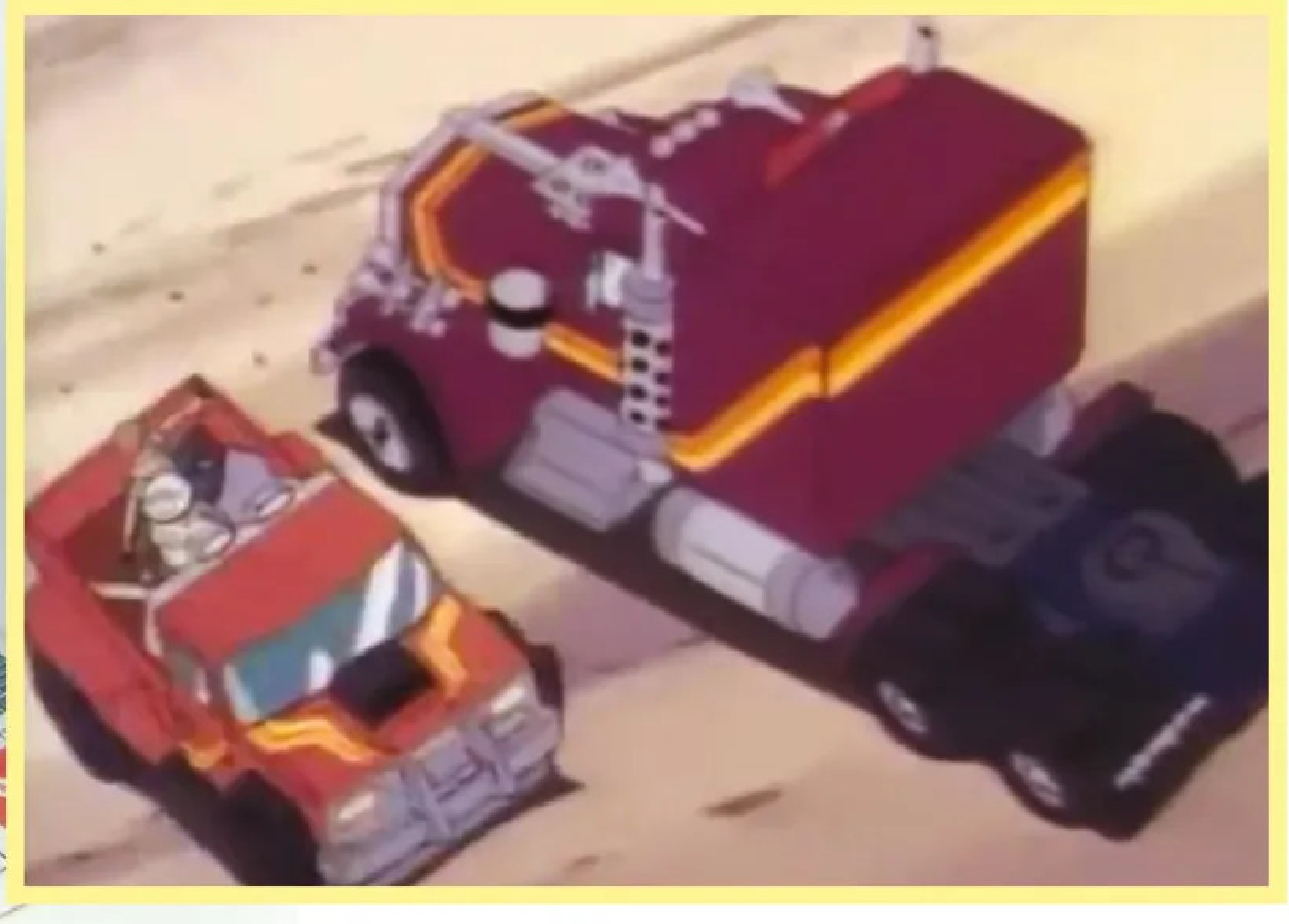


M.A.S.K. members had wristwatches of sorts – imagine what an Apple watch would be like at that time – so Matt Trakker could get in touch whenever there was an urgent mission about to take place.

## THE LEGACY

M.A.S.K. has been dormant since its '80s run. With the likes of G.I. Joe, Action Man, and to a lesser extent, Transformers still being active, there's not much room (or demand) for another action soldier series to exist. However, rumours persist that Hasbro and Paramount will team up for a M.A.S.K. film, and that could be what ignites the overdue comeback...





# MICRO MACHINES

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Galoob/Hasbro
**First released:** 1987
**Expect to pay:** £1-2 each

Toy cars have always been popular with kids, but how would you even go about attempting to launch a new product into such a crowded market? Simple – just make them really small! Galoob's popular line of tiny vehicles carried the tagline 'The Original Scale Miniatures', and that factor was a large part of what made them so appealing. Unlike cheaper small toy cars, Micro Machines were amazingly detailed, and only grew more so as more and more vehicles joined the line-up. Galoob didn't limit the line to cars, either – boats, aircraft and military vehicles were all included in the first wave of models, with more exotic additions like farming equipment, monster trucks, big rigs, spacecraft and trains coming in the following years.

It wasn't just the models themselves and their collectible nature that shot these shrunken vehicles to popularity, either. They had a lot of help from the awesome playsets that were released alongside them, and *every* collector wanted the Super City Toolbox – a replica mechanic's toolbox that served not only as a way to store and transport your collection, but also folded out into a huge city that could be constructed to drive, sail and fly around.

In the mid-'90s, Galoob scored a bunch of licences that saw vehicles from film and television join the garage. James Bond, Marvel, Star Trek and many others had their own lines, although production of the toys slowed after Galoob was acquired by Hasbro in 1998, before stopping entirely in 2007.

-POLICE STA
3

TION-
PIT
TEXAS
HIGHWAY PATROL
6
8
4

## THE LEGACY

Even though there might not be hundreds of new vehicles produced each year, the Micro Machines brand is still used by Hasbro from time to time. Just recently, a new line of vehicles and playsets was created to tie in with *Star Wars: The Force Awakens,* while the videogame spin-off based on the toys – which debuted on the NES in 1991 – continues to this day, as a new game was released for PC and consoles in 2017.

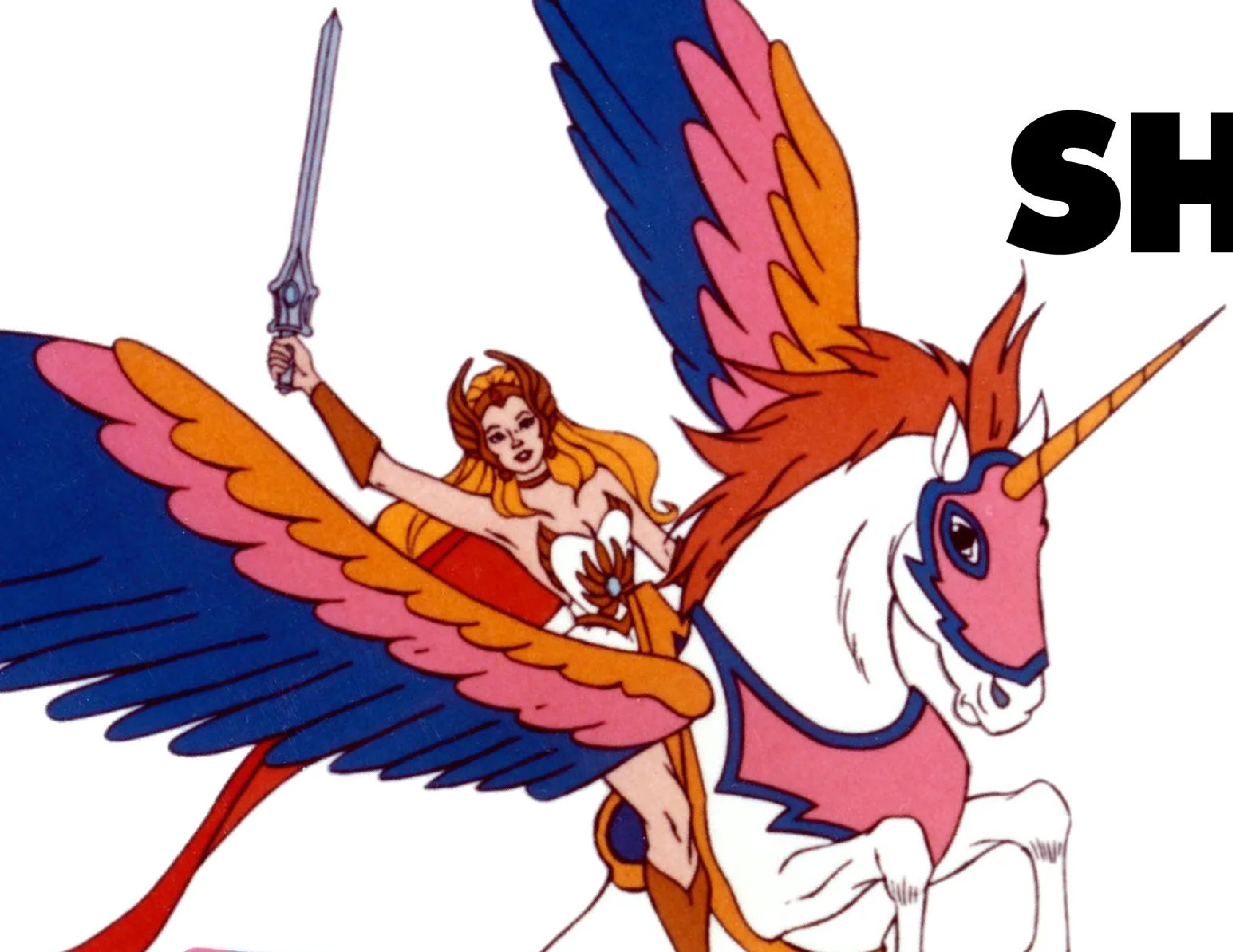
© JHPhoto/Alamy

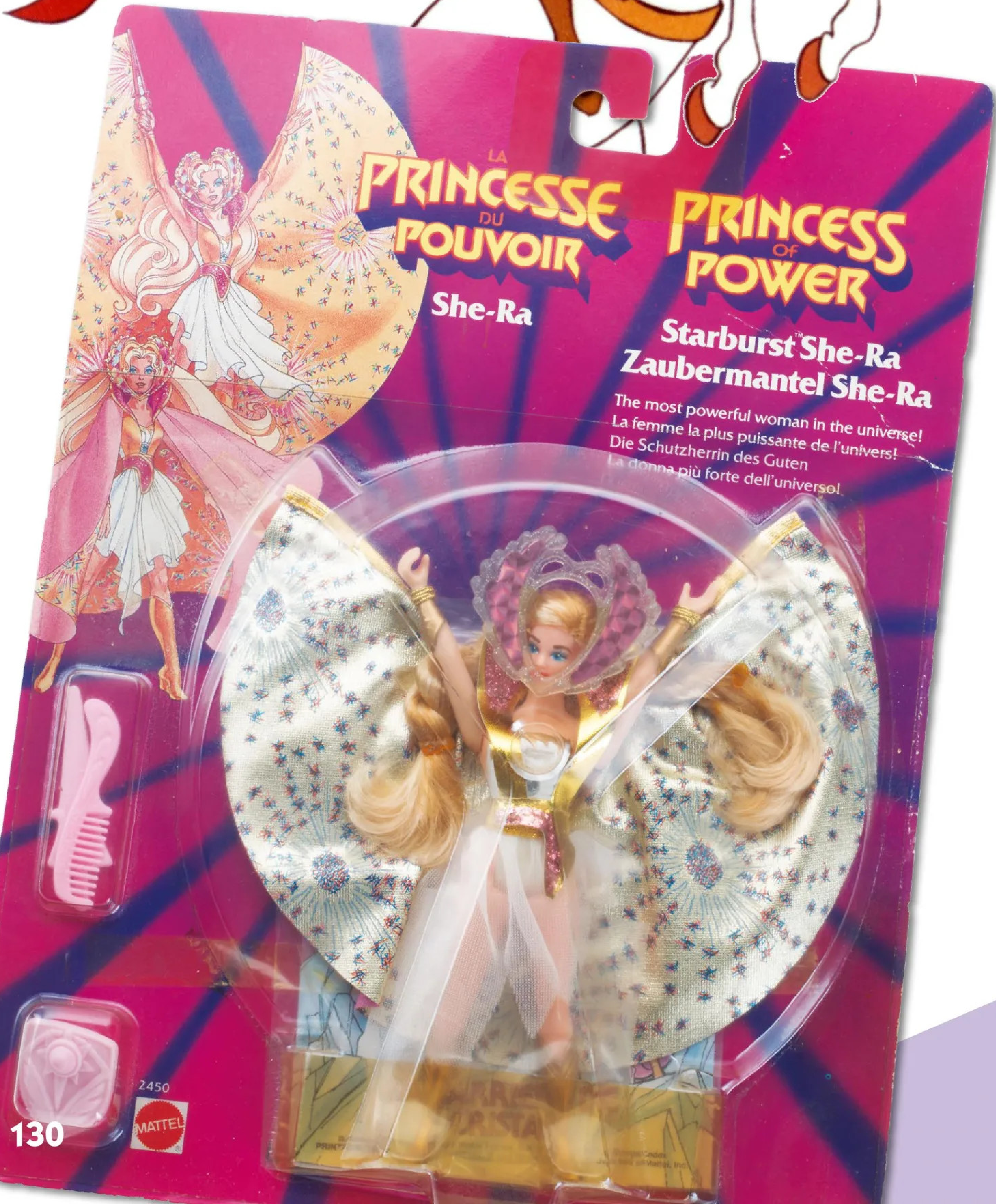
# SHE-RA

Dolls. Ponies. That was the extent of the market for toys aimed at girls in the '80s. There was even less choice for young girls on TV screens, where strong female characters were nowhere to be seen. Mattel, which had already created Barbie for girls and He-Man for boys, solved both of those problems in one stroke with She-Ra: Princess Of Power.

She-Ra was He-Man's twin sister, Princess Adora, but this cartoon was anything but a carbon copy of Prince Adam's adventures. She-Ra was kidnapped as a child and raised by the evil Hordak, in comparison to Prince Adam's cosy upbringing in the Eternian Royal Palace. She-Ra had similar strength to He-Man, but she could also communicate with animals and heal people with her touch alone. She-Ra's sword could transform into tools and weapons while He-Man's sword could not. Throughout the series, She-Ra's sword turned into a shield, parachute, boomerang and a helmet, among other things.

Perhaps the biggest difference was that She-Ra benefited from hitting TV screens two years after He-Man did. Not only did She-Ra's outing benefit from a larger budget thanks to He-Man's success, but the writing was much stronger, with complex storylines as She-Ra led a rebellion against the Horde. The cartoon ended before she could successfully defeat the Horde, but she didn't have to. In winning the hearts and minds of young girls, She-Ra had already won the most important battle of them all.



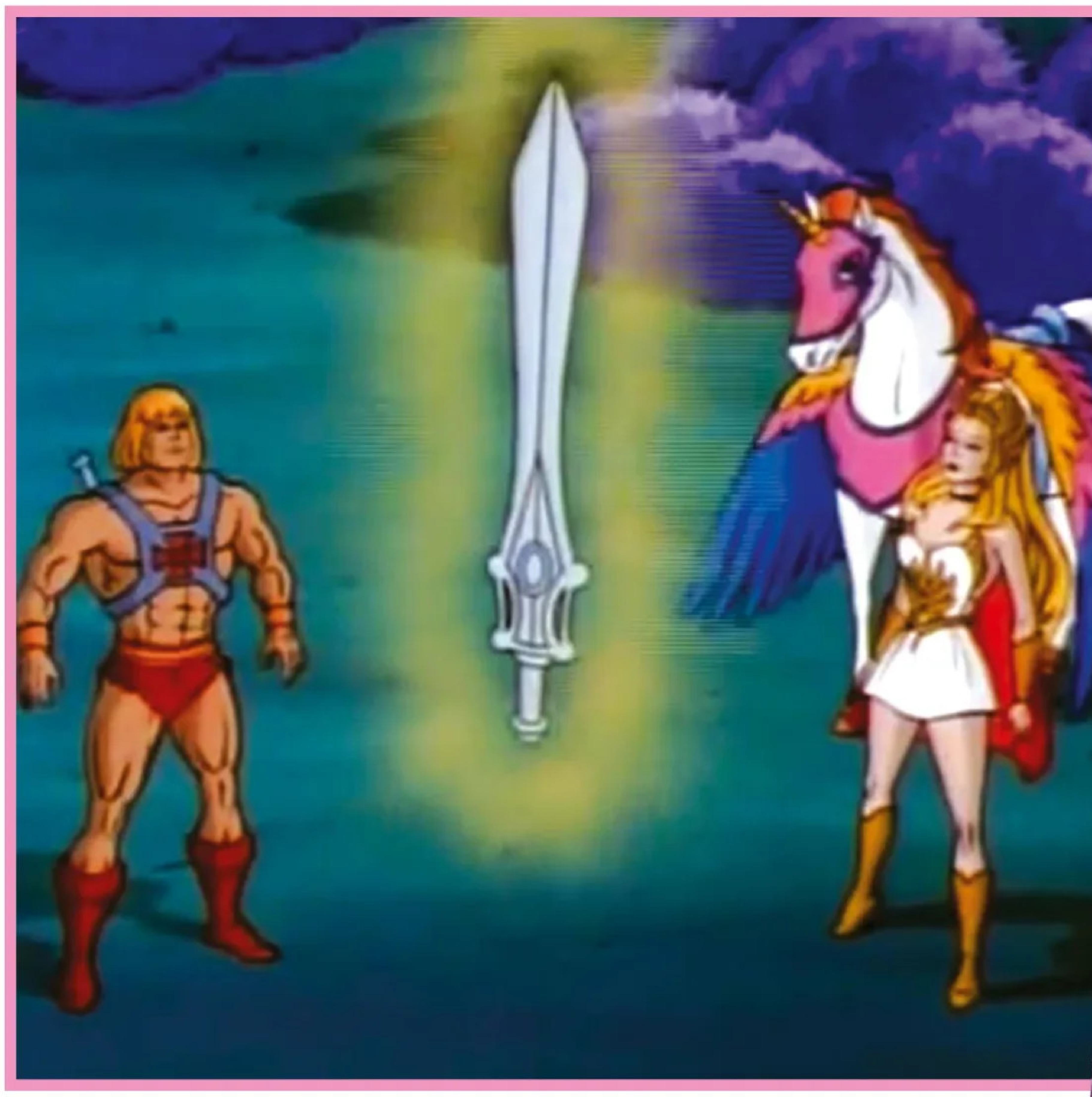

LA PRINCESSE DU POUVOIR
She-Ra
PRINCESS OF POWER
Starburst She-Ra
Zaubermantel She-Ra
The most powerful woman in the universe!
La femme la plus puissante de l'univers!
Die Schutzherrin des Guten
La donna più forte dell'universo!
2450
MATTEL

◀

The first three episodes of She-Ra have a different opening, because her identity is still unknown. Once it's shown that Princess Adora is She-Ra and the full storyline is revealed, after three episodes, the cartoon then switches to the intro that we know and love today.

## Information

**Manufacturer:** Mattel
**First released:** 1985
**Expect to pay:** Show available free on Amazon Prime



PRINCESS OF POWER™
LA PRINCESSE DU POUVOIR™
Glimmer®
The guide who lights the way
Die Prinzessin des Lichts!
La guida che illumina il cammino!
Scintilla®
L'amie de She-Ra™ au pouvoir lumineux
9188
Asst. 9238
MATTEL

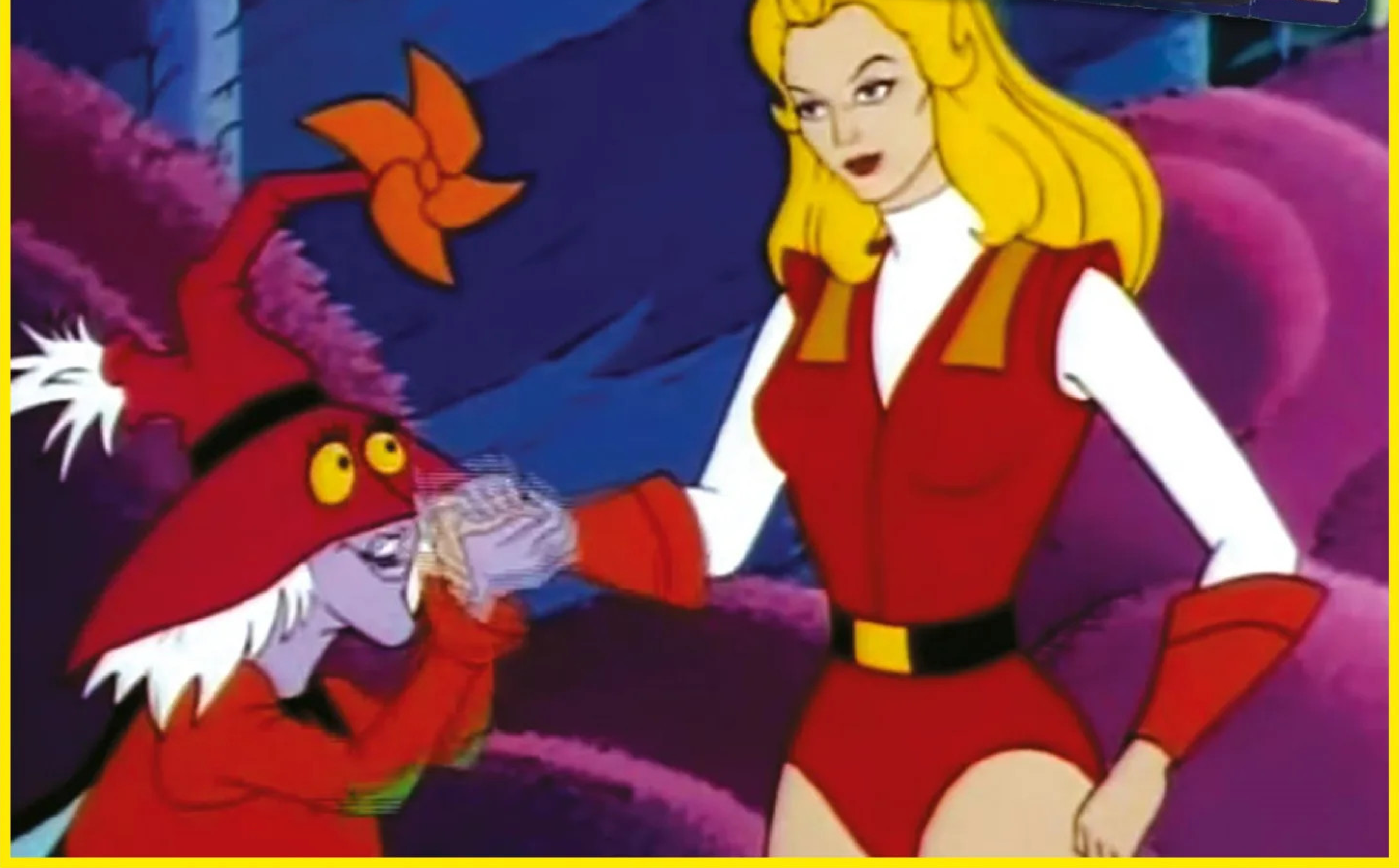
He-Man (or Prince Adam) appears in the early episodes and makes sporadic appearances following that, but he never steals the limelight. In one episode he's even captured by Hordak, who is setting a trap for Princess Adora. Princess Adora has to become She-Ra to save him.

One big difference between She-Ra and He-Man is that She-Ra's sword serves more purposes. It can turn into different tools, such as a rope with a grappling hook, enabling her to escape tight spots that He-Man's sword wouldn't allow him to.

Even though She-Ra is powerful, she's still shown to be vulnerable and have flaws. In one episode she finds herself captured while saving elves from Catra and Grizzlor, leaving her pirate friend Sea Hawk to save the day.

## THE LEGACY

She-Ra proved that girls are interested in more than dolls and ponies, and more importantly it proved that strong female characters belonged on the TV screen. Its success also arguably led to the cartoons like *Maxie's World* and *Jem and the Holograms*, while other cartoons like *Galaxy High* also had strong female characters in a leading role.



PYROMANIA
BEASTIE BOYS
SHE'S CRAFTY
NO SLEEP TILL BROOKLYN
BEASTIE BOYS
I Feel For You
ARETHA
WHO'S ZOOMIN' WHO?
ERIC B. RAKIM
PAID IN FULL
KRAFTWERK
COMPUTER WORLD
madonna
like a virgin
DURAN DURAN
RIO
CAMEO
WORD UP!
NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP
RICK ASTLEY
WHIP IT
DEVO
KURTIS BLOW
"THE BREAKS"
VOCAL
b/w
"THE BREAKS"
(INSTRUMENTAL/Do it yourself!)
12" SINGLE
VAN HALEN
JUMP!
MY ADIDAS/PETER PIPER
RUN DMC
12" SINGLE
Prince and the Revolution
Purple Rain
BON JOVI
Livin' On A Prayer
THE HUMAN
LEAGUE
LEAGUE
FREE
POSTER
DON'T YOU WANT ME
EYE OF THE TIGER
THE THEME FROM ROCKY III
Survivor
"EYE OF THE TIGER"
JOURNEY
DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'
Bobby Brown
DON'T BE CRUEL
A SALT with
FEATURING SPINDERELLA
Michael Jackson
Thriller

# MUSIC OF A GENERATION

### An explosion of new styles and the rise of some of history's biggest stars made the '80s an unforgettable decade in music

Greed. Glitz. Glamour. The 1980s was a time when music suddenly realised it could be bigger and better than everything else, as Reagan's USA was ushering a new ultra-capitalist age. While Gordon Gekko was telling us that "greed is good", we had basketball star Michael Jordan selling as many trainers as he was scoring points, and the modern Hollywood blockbuster took hold thanks to films like *ET* and the *Indiana Jones* series. It was inevitable that music would follow suit.

Pop reconfigured itself around the titanic talents of Michael Jackson and Madonna, who both knew how to use image to sell themselves and their music on a global stage. Heavy metal shook off its '70s stylings and became much sleazier and more fun, with Guns N' Roses leading the charge.

In 1981, MTV began broadcasting 24 hours a day, rewarding bands like A-Ha who put as much stock into innovative music videos as they did their songs. But the '80s wasn't just about old scenes evolving. It also saw dance music take off, taking the nightclub baton from disco as Chicago gave birth to house music and Detroit ushered in techno.

Hip-hop carried on where The Sugarhill Gang left off, with Run DMC and De La Soul leading the way for 'positive' hip-hop. On the flip side, however, growing inner-city struggles led to gangsta rap taking hold, a firestorm of controversy following it. From fresh takes on old scenes to entirely new genres, the '80s truly had it all. Perhaps greed was good after all…

## EVENTS

### John Lennon Killed

1980

The 1980s opened with the shocking news that former Beatle John Lennon had been killed, shot dead on his doorstep by a crazed fan. It wasn't just a music legend we lost that day. It was a sign of the darker side of celebrity, one that would inform how we saw musical artists throughout the 1980s, as they became more ubiquitous and larger than life.

MUSIC TELEVISION®

### MTV Begins Broadcasting

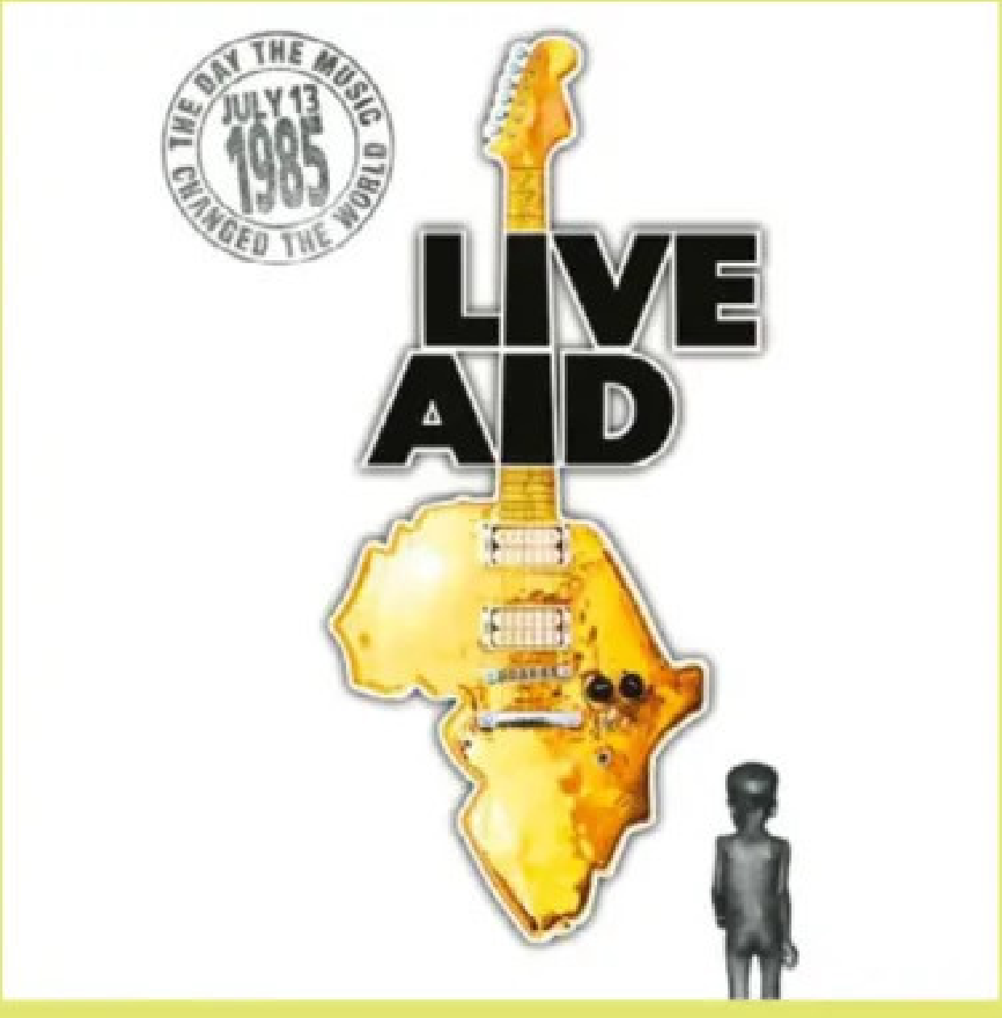
August 1981

MTV's life began with a logo superimposed on the flag an astronaut is sticking into the moon. Rather fittingly, the first video played was Video Killed The Radio Star by The Buggles, a prophetic choice hinting at the groundbreaking influence and change that MTV would inspire in the industry. MTV itself would go on to become a media powerhouse, and remains so to this day.

### Ronald Reagan co-opts 'Born In The USA'

1984

Bruce Springsteen's song was about a Vietnam veteran struggling with poverty, its "I was born in the USA" chorus a sarcastic thank-you to the nation. But Reagan used that chorus for his re-election campaign and, stripped of context, it sounded like a rousing anthem celebrating America. Bruce was appalled.


LIVE AID
THE DAY THE MUSIC CHANGED THE WORLD
JULY 13 1985

### Live Aid Concert

1985

Live Aid saw Bob Geldof put on two concerts featuring all-star line-ups in order to raise money for charity. £50 million later, he could say job well done. But music had changed forever in the process. Millions tuned in worldwide to see acts like The Who, U2 and Duran Duran repackaged as schmaltzy showbiz entertainment for the benefit of TV broadcasts.

### Madchester Is Born

1988

Dance music was born in Chicago and Detroit, but the scene would evolve in Manchester, England. Through the opening of new club Hacienda, nights featuring superstar DJs like Frankie Knuckles and bands like The Stone Roses and Happy Mondays, Manchester quickly reinvented itself as 'Madchester', home of hedonism and illegal raves.

# POP ICONS

Pop in the '80s belonged to two artists who refused to play by the rules: Michael Jackson and Madonna. It's hard to think of two musicians who have had a bigger impact on pop culture, as they were both acutely aware of the one change the '80s ushered in that all pop artists had to be aware of – image. Michael Jackson became a larger-than-life celebrity while Madonna specialised in grabbing attention, both using their image to draw attention to their music. They were stars made for MTV and they realised having great songs is only part of the battle, as the '80s changed the music landscape.

Pop music itself was transforming at a rapid pace and not just because of MTV and the new-found thirst for music videos. New technology meant pop had slicker production, crisper beats and could call on influences from other genres. Whether it was the synth-infused pop of The Human League, the reggae-influenced beats of UB40 or the drama of Ultravox, pop drew from more corners of the musical spectrum than ever before. The music felt exciting, fresh, fun and unpredictable.

▲ **Michael Jackson**

The King of Pop was at the height of his powers in the '80s. Having left his cute adolescent persona behind, Michael Jackson waged a one-man war on the senses through his music, his singing, his dancing, his videos, his fashion, his live shows and his celebrity. *Thriller* had the songs, Bad had the attitude, the man himself had the ambition and drive to take music to a whole new level. Where Michael Jackson went, pop culture followed, and his star was big enough that everything else got pulled along by his irresistible gravity.

## GREATEST HITS

### ALBUMS

Michael Jackson
Thriller

#### Thriller

Michael Jackson

1982

Make no mistake – *Thriller* revolutionised the entire music industry. Not only did its many singles reach the top of the charts, but its music videos, Michael Jackson's dancing, his unique outfits and the supporting live shows proved that music artists can be an assault on all senses, and not just the ears. It remains the best-selling album of all time.

DURAN DURAN
RIO

#### Rio

Duran Duran

1982

Duran Duran had long worked out that the secret to succeeding in music during the 1980s wasn't just putting out great tunes. It was aspiration. With their devilish good looks, sharp suits and glamorous music videos, we wanted to be Duran Duran as much as we enjoyed listening to their new-wave assaults on the charts.

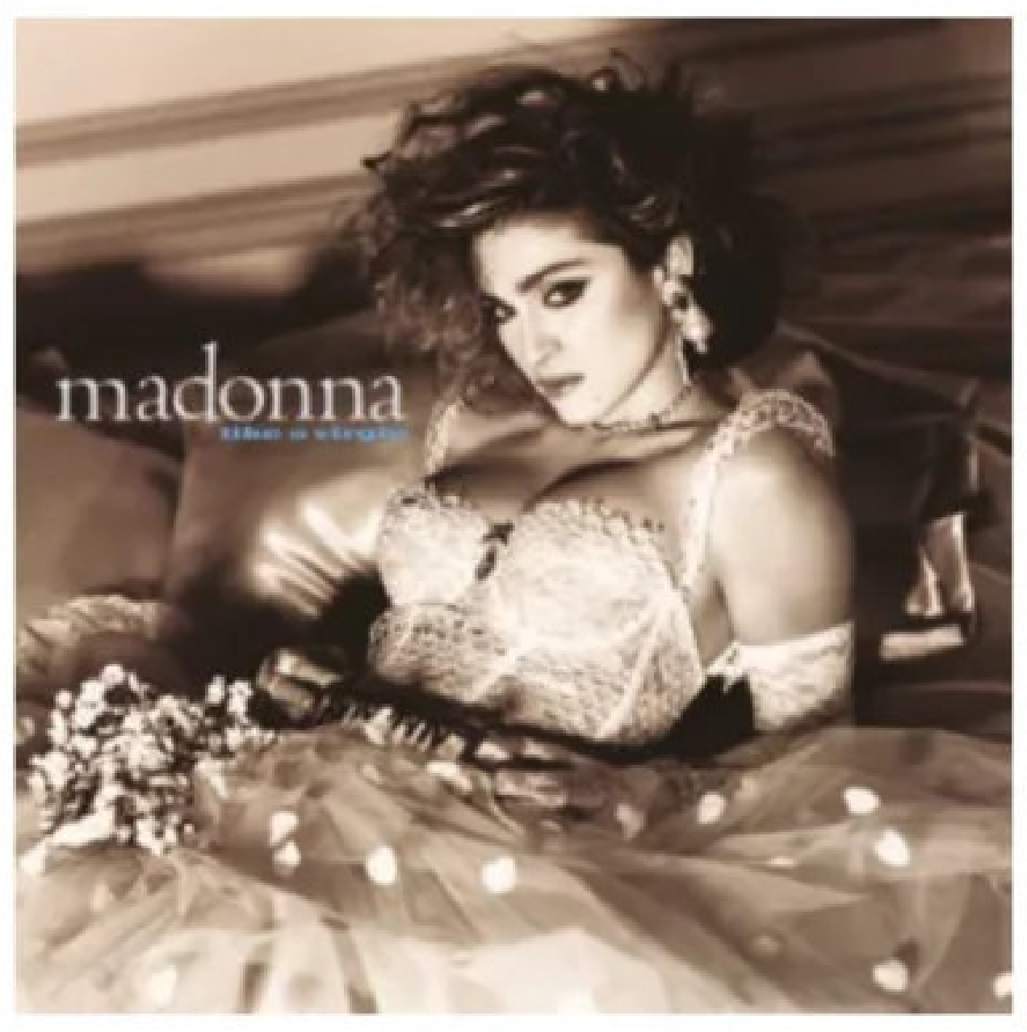
TEARS FOR FEARS
Songs From The Big Chair

#### Songs From The Big Chair

Tears For Fears

1985

As pop music lurched towards using more synthesizers and keyboards, Tears For Fears decided to zig rather than zag. Their hit record, *Songs From The Big Chair* put guitars at the forefront of their pop assaults on the charts, and the result is a considered, mature sound that has seen the album stand the test of time.

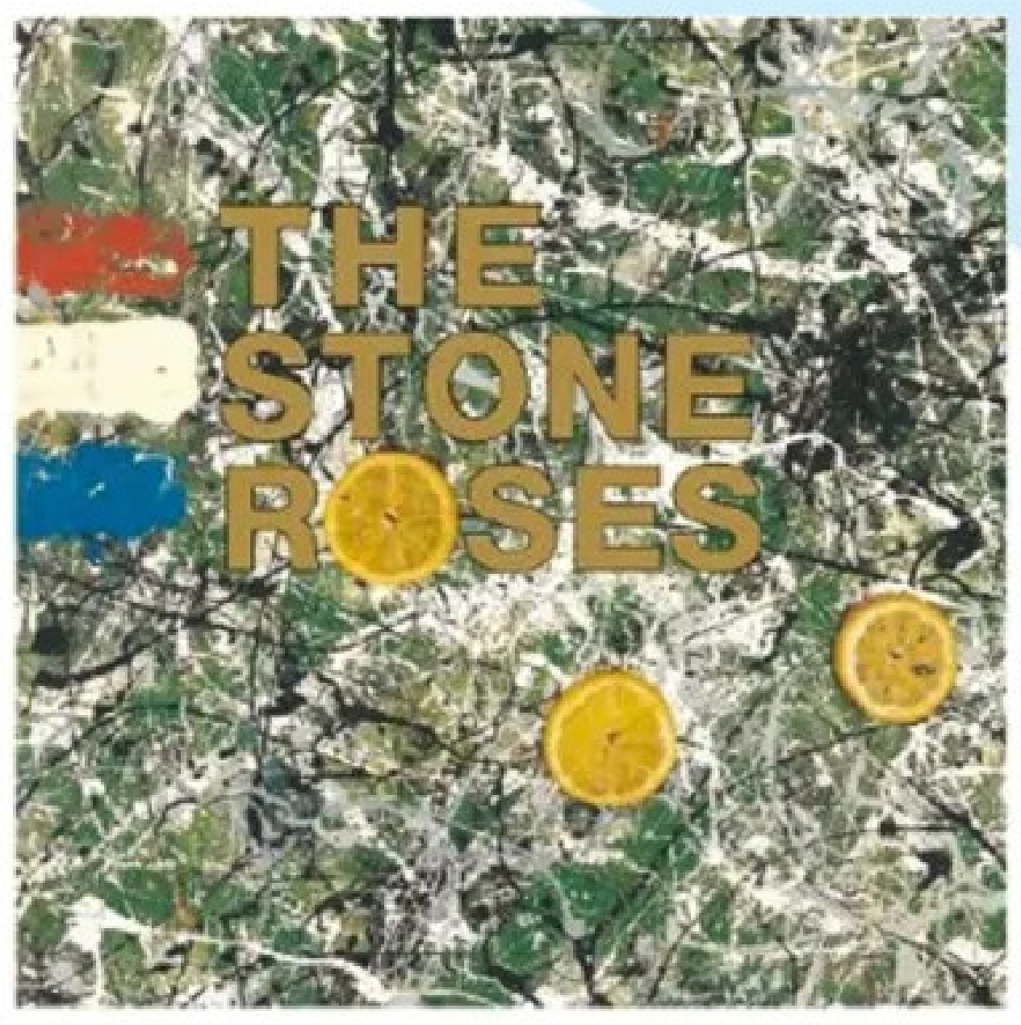


#### Like A Virgin

Madonna

1984

From the infectious energy of *Holiday* (admittedly not on this album) to the money-over-men message of *Material Girl,* Madonna's songs all offered something different. But *Like A Virgin* sums her up better – naughty, borderline outrageous, executed with a cheeky wink and a smile that she knows she's tiptoeing a fine line.

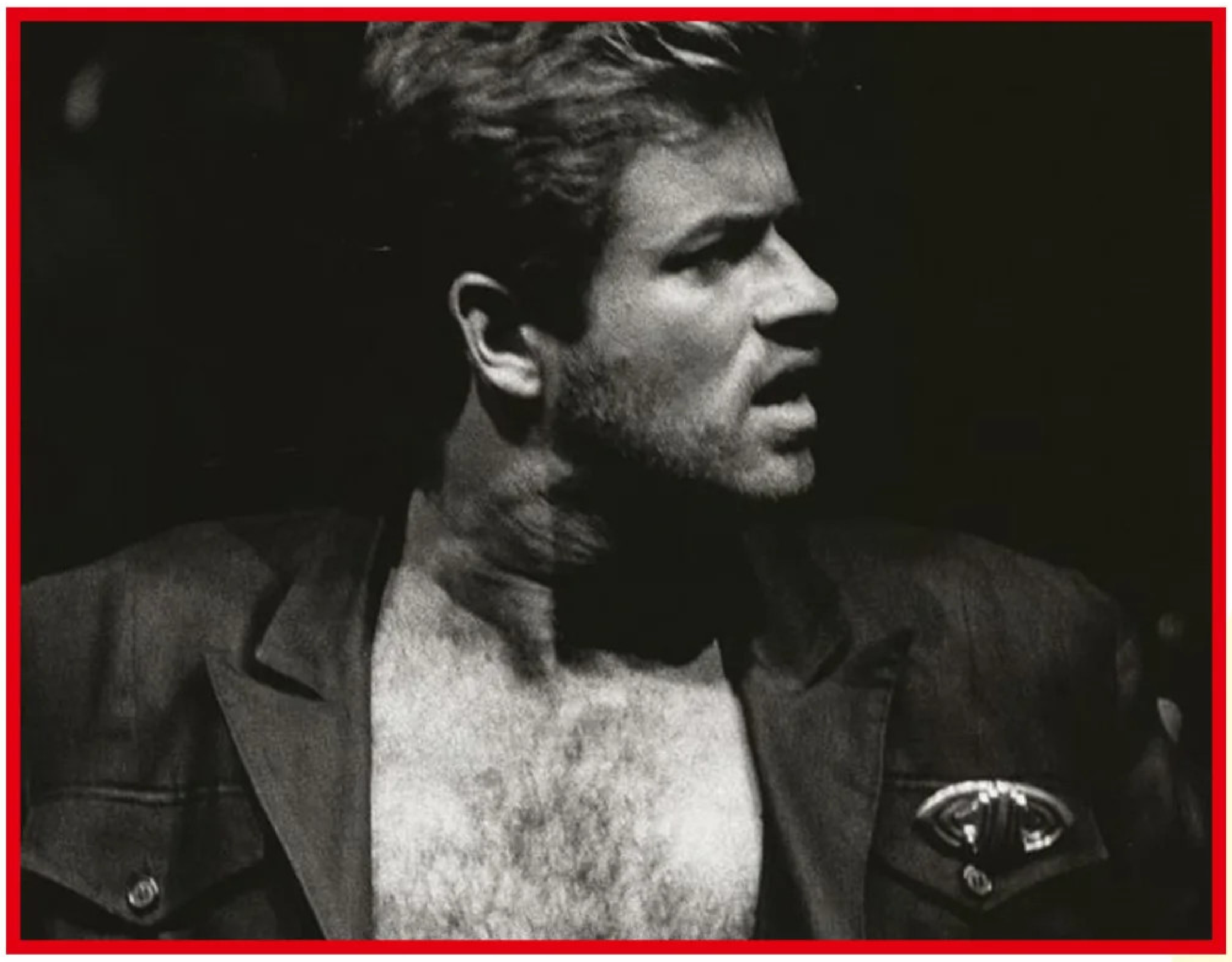


#### The Stone Roses

The Stone Roses

1989

A sign of things to come, The Stone Roses would likely have kicked off the Britpop movement themselves had it not been for legal troubles with their record label. In any case, they set the template for Britpop with their unique combination of indie, pop choruses and sombre tales of everyday life.



### George Michael

George Michael didn't have to wait long for success. As one half of Wham, he found himself comfortable at the top of the charts, through singles like *Club Tropicana* and *Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go*. He proved there was more to his talent than high-energy party hits with his first solo release *Careless Whisper*, a saxophone-led song about a lost love, and that saw him launch a full solo career. What followed were collaborations with duets with Aretha Franklin (*I Knew You Were Waiting*), controversial releases that were banned from radio (*I Want Your Sex*) and a number one album (*Faith*).

### Madonna

When Madonna burst onto the scene, she completely rewrote what women were capable of in the music industry. A fiery mix of dance pop energy and self-confidence, Madonna sang about men, sex and money. The media were fascinated by her and wherever Madonna went, newspapers would follow, writing about her personal life and tour antics with feverish excitement. In turn, she would use the media to promote herself and her music, becoming the first artist to willingly use the power of celebrity to get her music to reach an even wider audience.

## SONGS

THE HUMAN
LEAGUE
LEAGUE
includes FREE POSTER
DON'T YOU WANT ME

### Don't You Want Me

The Human League

1981

Has there ever been a darker pop song? This tale of longing after a lost love borders on menacing, but it's that sinister edge that makes *Don't You Want Me* so compelling. Phil Oakey and Susan Ann Sulley trading vocals to tell their own side of the story is a masterstroke, making it one of pop's best songs.

Kate Bush.
Running up that hill.

### Running Up That Hill

Kate Bush

1985

A dreamy, ethereal song that seems to want to soar away up into the clouds rather than being tied down to earth. Kate Bush's alluring mystery and layered vocals add extra intrigue to a pop song that dared to be radically different, and it sounds every bit as enchanting now as it did in 1985.

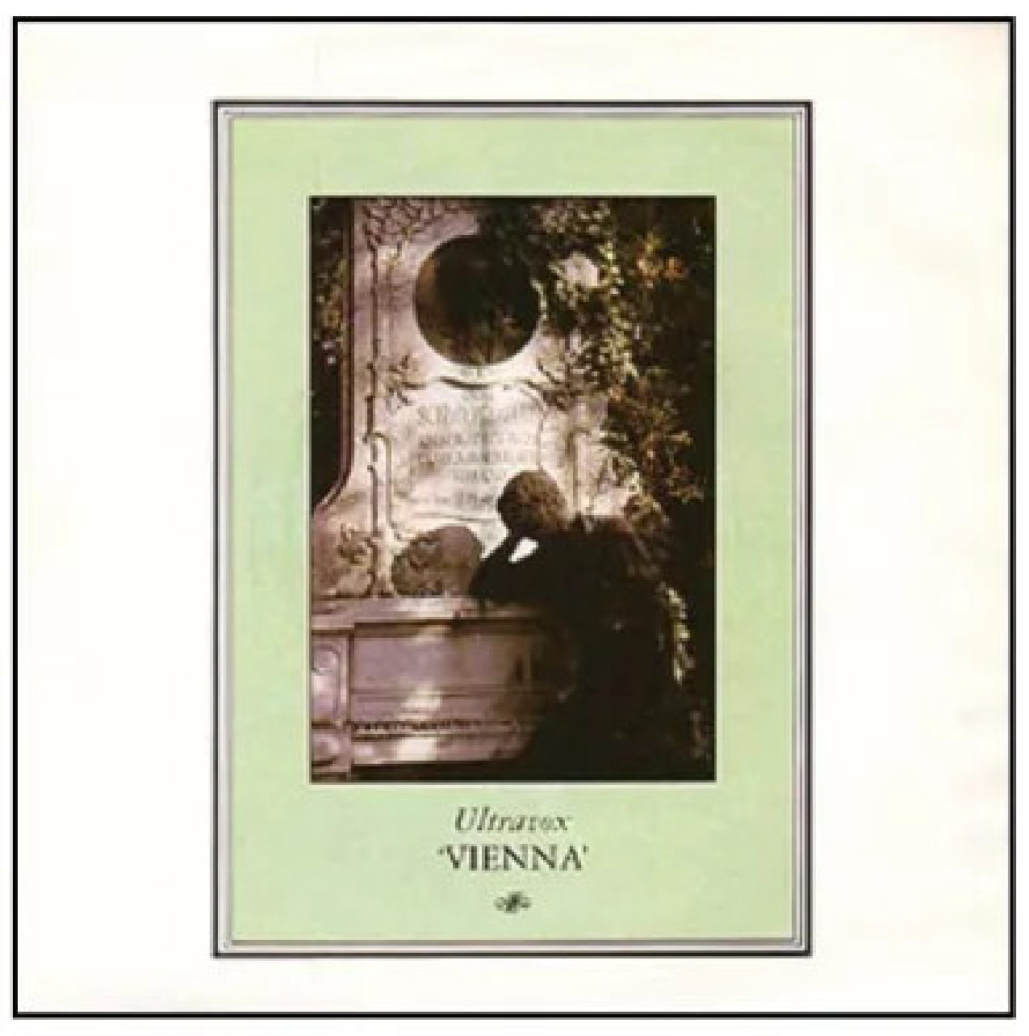
a-ha
take on me

### Take On Me

A-Ha

1985

The song that has ended many drunken karaoke nights, *Take On Me* was also a milestone moment for music videos. Its combination of live acting and pencil-sketch animation ensured that it received heavy rotation on the fledgling MTV, proving that innovative videos are another way to get your song in front of new audiences.

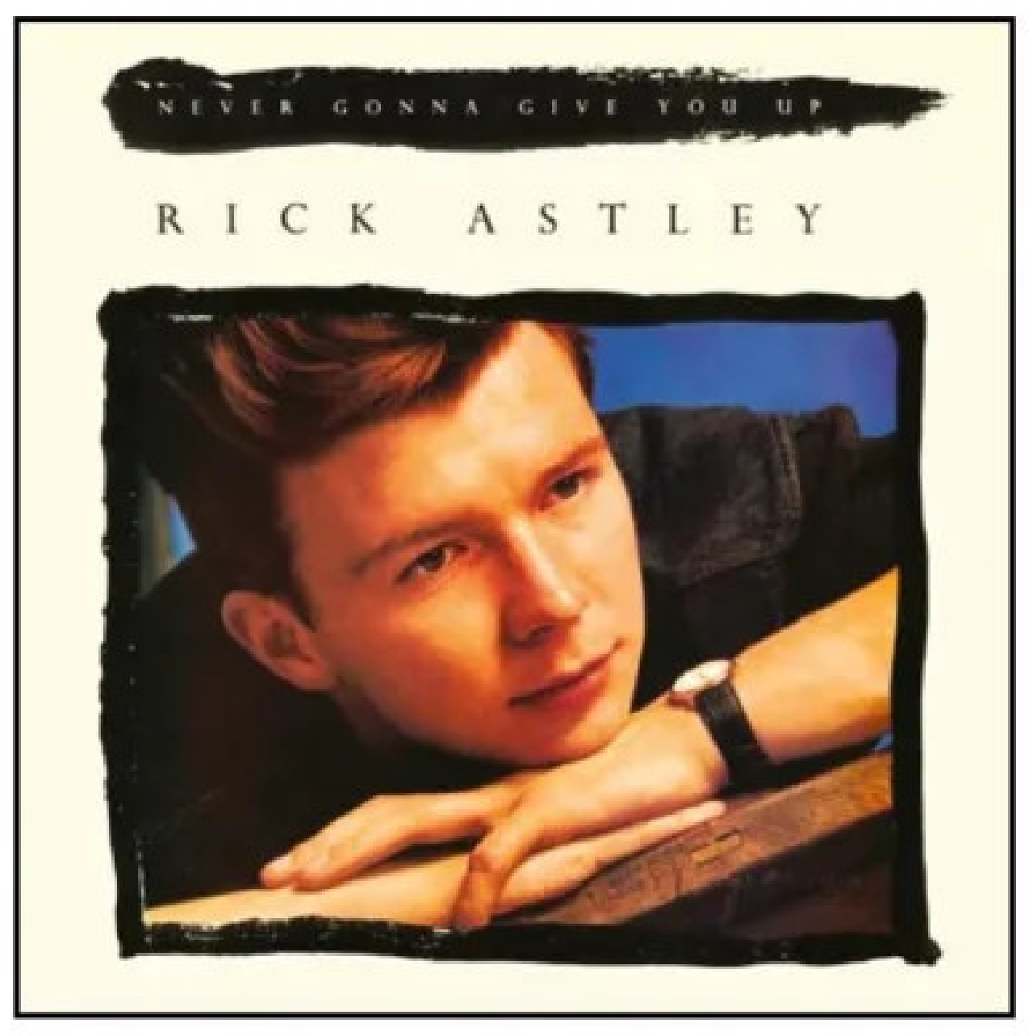


### Vienna

Ultravox

1981

It should have been ridiculous. Its spare bursts of piano, operatic vocals and unpredictable song structure – all for a song about… Vienna? But Ultravox's most iconic track pulled all of these elements off with such confidence and panache that you can't help but get swept along by its vivid imagery and captivating drama.



### Never Gonna Give You Up

Rick Astley

1987

It's guaranteed a place in pop culture infamy thanks to 'rickrolling', where people are tricked into watching the music video. But *Never Gonna Give You Up* was a massive hit in 1987, a number one in many countries. Is it an awesome or terrible song? Like many things '80s, that's up to the individual…

# ROCK

Rock in the '70s had been dominated by two very different strands of the genre. In one corner, David Bowie was leading the glam rock charge, whose artists were pushing boundaries and image as far as they would go, almost an experiment to test how far the audience would come along with them on their journey. In the other corner, the likes of Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath were laying down thick, heavy riffs, their mystical lyrics taking listeners on a journey to heaven and hell.

The '80s is where the two genres would finally meet as the rock and metal scene exploded, with hair metal being the defining genre of the time. It combined metal riffs with a carefully crafted image, moving away from the dungeons and demons themes metal had previously been plagued with to sing about girls and good times. Rock and metal finally became something most people could relate to.

If anything, the rock and metal scene became splintered as it became commercial enough for different subgenres to emerge. Metallica dominated thrash, Iron Maiden kept old-school metal alive, U2 brought sensitivity to the genre, Guns N' Roses conquered the world.

**▲ Queen**

Although Queen made their name in the 1970s, they transformed pop culture a decade later. Through songs like *Another One Bites The Dust,* events like Live Aid, David Bowie collaborations, and the unfortunate passing of the flamboyant Freddie Mercury, they were a band that dominated the airwaves and newspaper headlines. Queen had a huge hand in influencing music, celebrity and even fashion, as they effortlessly morphed from epic rock-opera masters to a band that consistently cranked out huge stadium hits.

# ICONS

**▲ Guns N' Roses**

No band summed up the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll ethos quite like Guns N' Roses did. The LA-based band added an air of menace to the hair metal scene, making them an infinitely cooler and sexier alternative to bands like Ratt and Poison. Their live shows also quickly became legendary, leaving sold-out arenas across the world a sweaty, exhausted mess. But the real secret to their success was the brilliance of their songs, the likes of *Welcome to the Jungle* and *Sweet Child O' Mine* making the most of Slash's squealing guitar and Axl Rose's impossible vocals.

**▲ Metallica**

On the more extreme end of the rock scale, Metallica were becoming thrash metal legends throughout the 1980s. Their first four albums were hugely influential and shaped thrash metal, with 1986's *Master of Puppets* still considered the best in the genre. Although Metallica would go on to greater mainstream success a decade later with their self-titled album, it would sport a broader, commercial sound. Metallica's thrash metal success is almost entirely confined to the '80s, with the genre itself fading to the background when Metallica themselves moved on.

# GREATEST HITS

## ALBUMS

### Appetite For Destruction

Guns N' Roses

1987

The album that rewrote all the rock rules. From the opening guitar attack of *Welcome to the Jungle,* with Axl Rose's distinctive howl swelling behind it, it's a perfect indicator of the chaos that's to come. Still regarded as one of the best albums ever made, Guns N' Roses would never top their ferocious debut.

### Back In Black

AC/DC

1980

There was nothing complicated about AC/DC. The guitar riffs were hypnotic, the lyrics simple, the drumming like clockwork. But the songs were glorious, whisky-soaked tributes to nights out and good times. The fun oozed out of every chord and you couldn't help but get swept along by AC/DC's infectious enthusiasm.

### The Joshua Tree

U2

1987

An incredible album that proves music can have power without necessarily needing heavy riffs to propel it. Written after the band toured the US, Bono wasn't afraid to bare his soul as he considered his place in the world, and that vulnerability informed the music just as much as it did his lyrics.

### Pyromania

Def Leppard

1983

Def Leppard released two of the greatest rock albums in the 1980s: *Pyromania and Hysteria*. There's little to separate them. Both are full of anthems with catchy choruses and pounding riffs, and are delivered by five good-looking lads from Sheffield with hair that could only have been considered cool in the '80s.

### Number Of The Beast

Iron Maiden

1982

Death, taxes and Iron Maiden. The only thing that's changed with the British metal band is that their hair has gone steadily more grey over the years. Their sound, epic metal that sometimes verges on ridiculous rock opera, hasn't changed and *Number Of The Beast* saw them at the height of their powers.

## SONGS

### Don't Stop Believin'

Journey

1981

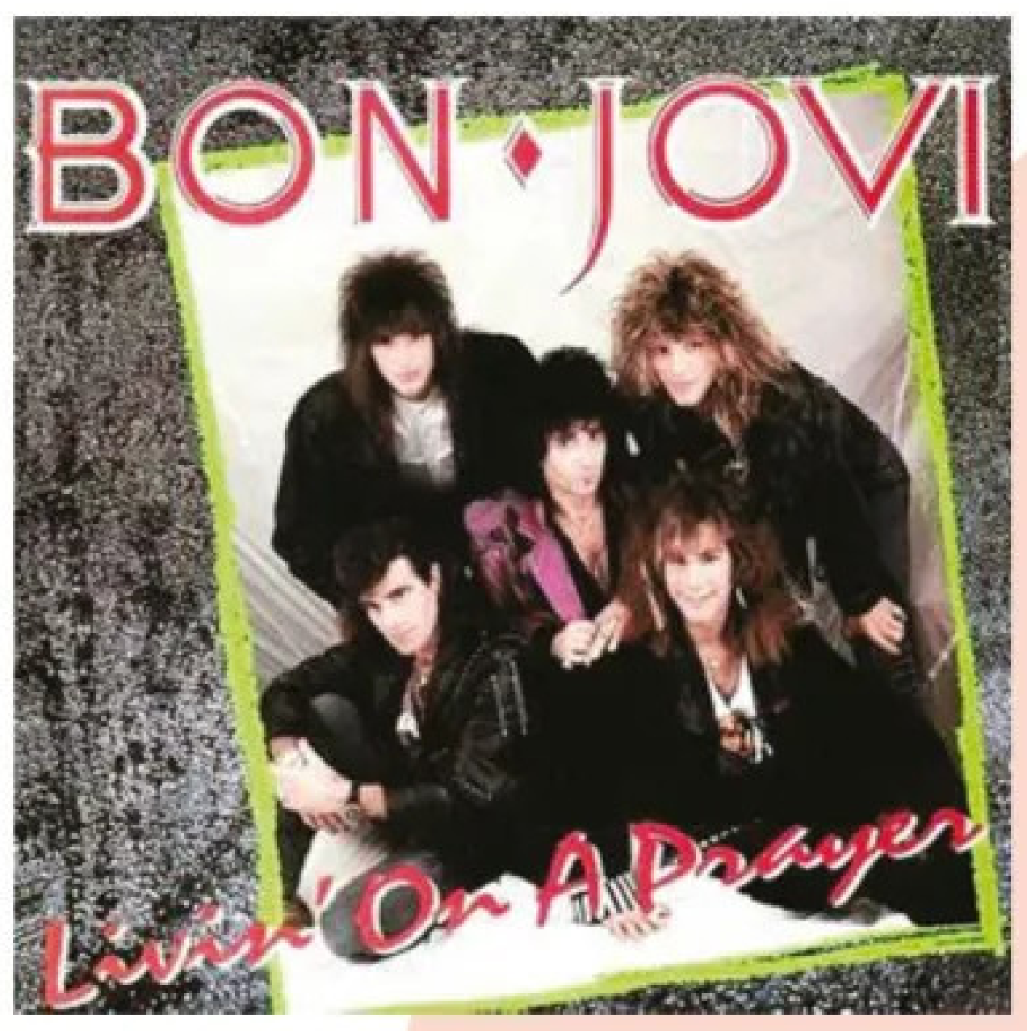
It's a slow-burner of a song, taking its time building up to its chorus with its boy-meets-girl tale. But once it hits the chorus, Journey unleash with everything they have – soaring guitar runs, dramatic piano and those vocals. It's still finding new audiences today, thanks to a cover by the cast of *Glee.*

### Purple Rain

Prince

1984

An artist so versatile he could fit into almost every musical category spread across these pages, Prince's *Purple Rain* is a perfect example of how it's difficult to pigeonhole the late, great musician. It's a timeless rock ballad manages to be both soft and sensual without sacrificing any of its power, as dramatic and vital as it is easy to listen to.



### Livin' On A Prayer

Bon Jovi

1986

"Tommy used to work on the docks…" So starts Bon Jovi's biggest and most iconic hit, which builds to a chorus with a high note that everyone tries (and fails) at karaoke. It's no surprise the song has become such a karaoke hit, as it's Jon Bon Jovi's driving vocals that really make it an all-time classic anthem.

### Jump

Van Halen

1984

What's unusual about this rock song is that the dominant instrument is a keyboard, more unusual still given that Eddie Van Halen's trademark is teasing impossible notes from his guitar. But the unique take on a rock song, relentless energy and catchy "go ahead and jump!" chorus all come together perfectly to make this a classic.

### Eye Of The Tiger

Survivor

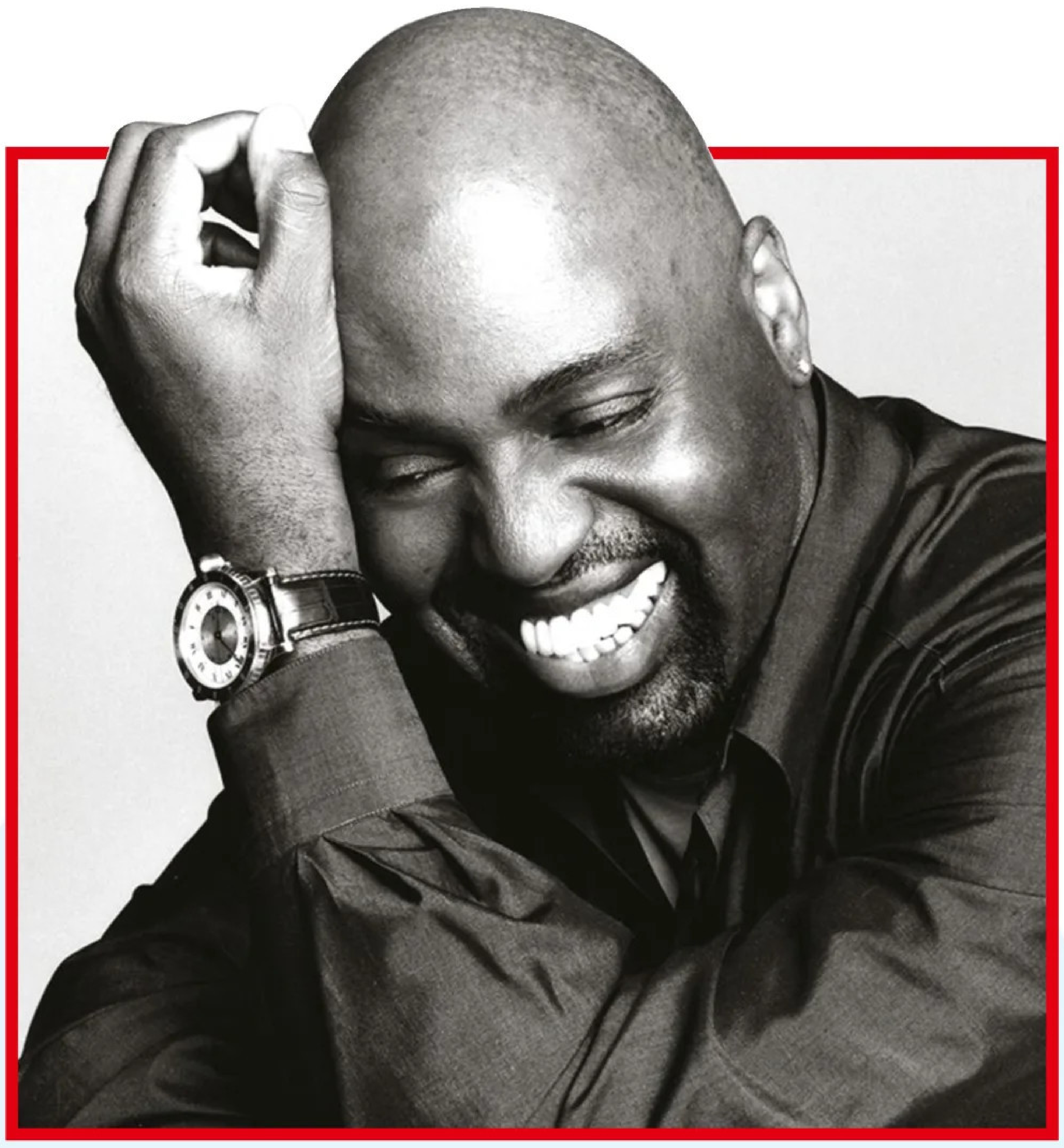
1982

If it's good enough for Rocky, it's good enough for us. A driving, thumping, air-punching number, *Eye of the Tiger* chugs along with its relentless rhythm and pounding bass to get your foot tapping. It was originally written for *Rocky III,* hence why the lyrics are about the thrill of the fight and surviving.

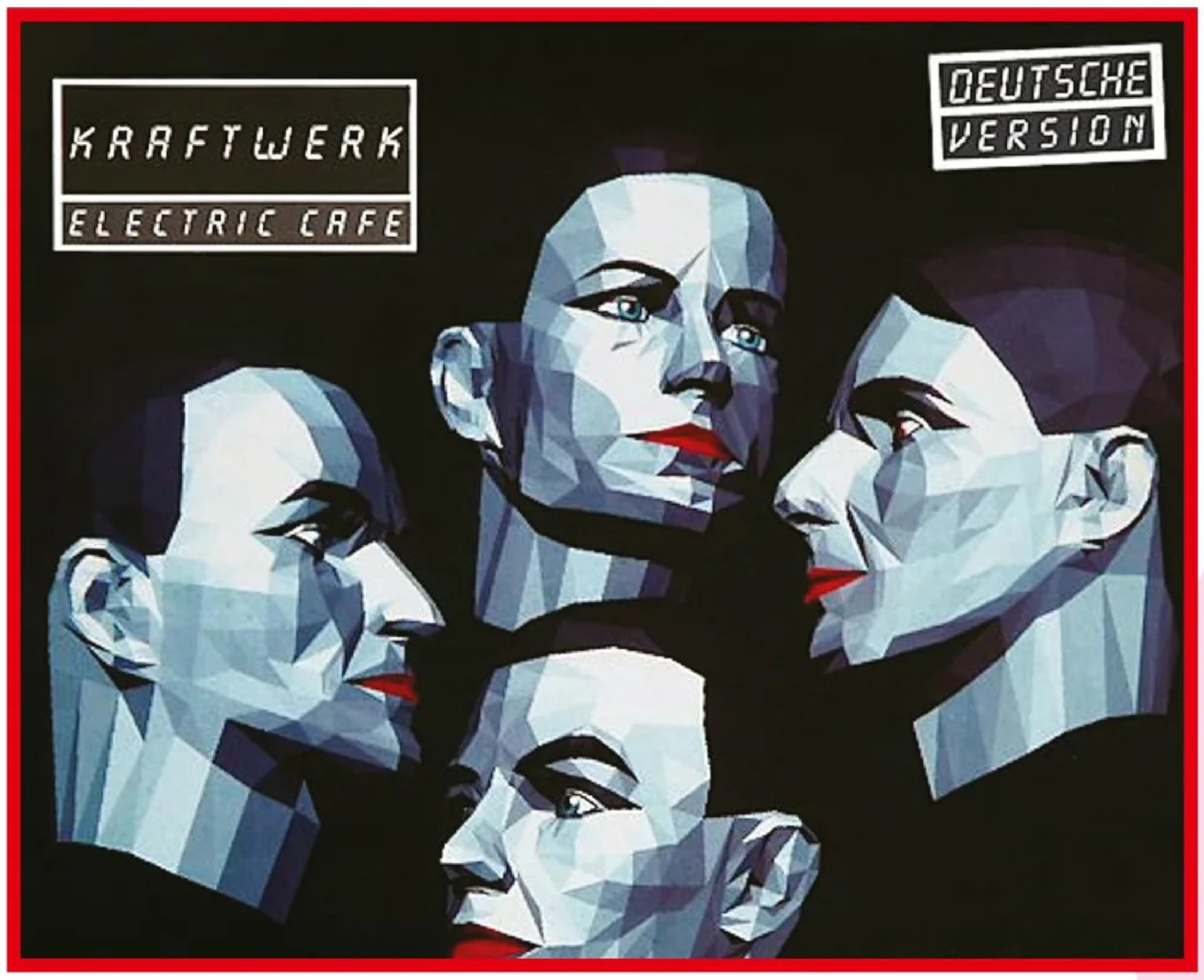
# ELECTRONIC ICONS

EDM. Trance. Techno. Drum and bass. House. Dubstep. Whatever electronic music you're into, it all started in the '80s. The advent of bass synthesizers and programmable drum machines led to new forms of music filling nightclubs where disco's popularity had finally started to fade, the rhythmic beats of America's new house and techno scenes keeping dance floors busy. Alongside the growing hip-hop culture found in New York, names like Frankie Knuckles and Derrick May proved DJs could become household names as they became the first well-known club DJs.

It wasn't just the underground dance scene that was discovering new music, either. As synthesizers and keyboards became more common, pop music began to take note and incorporate these new, unusual sounds into their work. This gave rise to the likes of Pet Shop Boys, New Order and Gary Numan, who fused the cold, steely sounds of electronic music to pop's warm heart. The result was a flood of music in the pop charts that you could dance to, powered by keyboards and drum machines. With personal computers, VCRs, Walkmans and game consoles all taking off in the '80s, music's fascination with technology mirrored ours as a society.



▲ **Frankie Knuckles**
Modern house music can be traced back to Frankie Knuckles. Known as 'The Godfather of House Music', this Chicago DJ effectively created the genre in the mid-'80s and tirelessly promoted it. He combined the funky bass and soaring vocals of disco with hard drum machine beats he created with a drum machine. He called this new musical style 'house', named after the Warehouse club where he was the resident DJ. The popularity of house soon spread from its native Chicago to the rest of the US, to the UK, and eventually the world.



▲ **Kraftwerk**
Given its sparse and industrial sound, techno sounds like the sort of music genre that would have been created in a lab, perhaps a by-product of Skynet's attempts to build the Terminator. The truth is far less exciting. Techno's birth was a Detroit high-school, where three students were inspired to create the genre's ominous and claustrophobic 4/4 beats by Kraftwerk's music. Kraftwerk's influence spread further than the birth of techno, though. The German synth-pop group also brought new standards for live shows, group concepts, futuristic sounds and pushing the boundaries of what music technology can create.

▲ **Pet Shop Boys**
Existing in the overlap between 'dance' and 'pop' on the musical Venn diagram, Pet Shop Boys welded both genres together as though it was the most normal thing in the world. The end result was tunes that existed just as comfortably in nightclubs as they did on daytime radio, appealing to a broad spectrum of music fans. In 1985 they scored a number-one in the UK, US and elswhere with *West End Girls,* following it up with a raft of hit singles in the '80s, including *It's a Sin, Always On My Mind* and *Heart.* More hits followed in the '90s and their career has continued right up to the present day.

# GREATEST HITS

## ALBUMS

### Computer World

Kraftwerk

1981

Kraftwerk were veterans by this point, *Computer World* being their eighth album, and it's here that their ambition really took flight. Songs about the rise of computers, international releases in different languages, and an alien sound that left others following in their wake. Now considered one of the '80s' best.

### Telekon

Gary Numan

1980

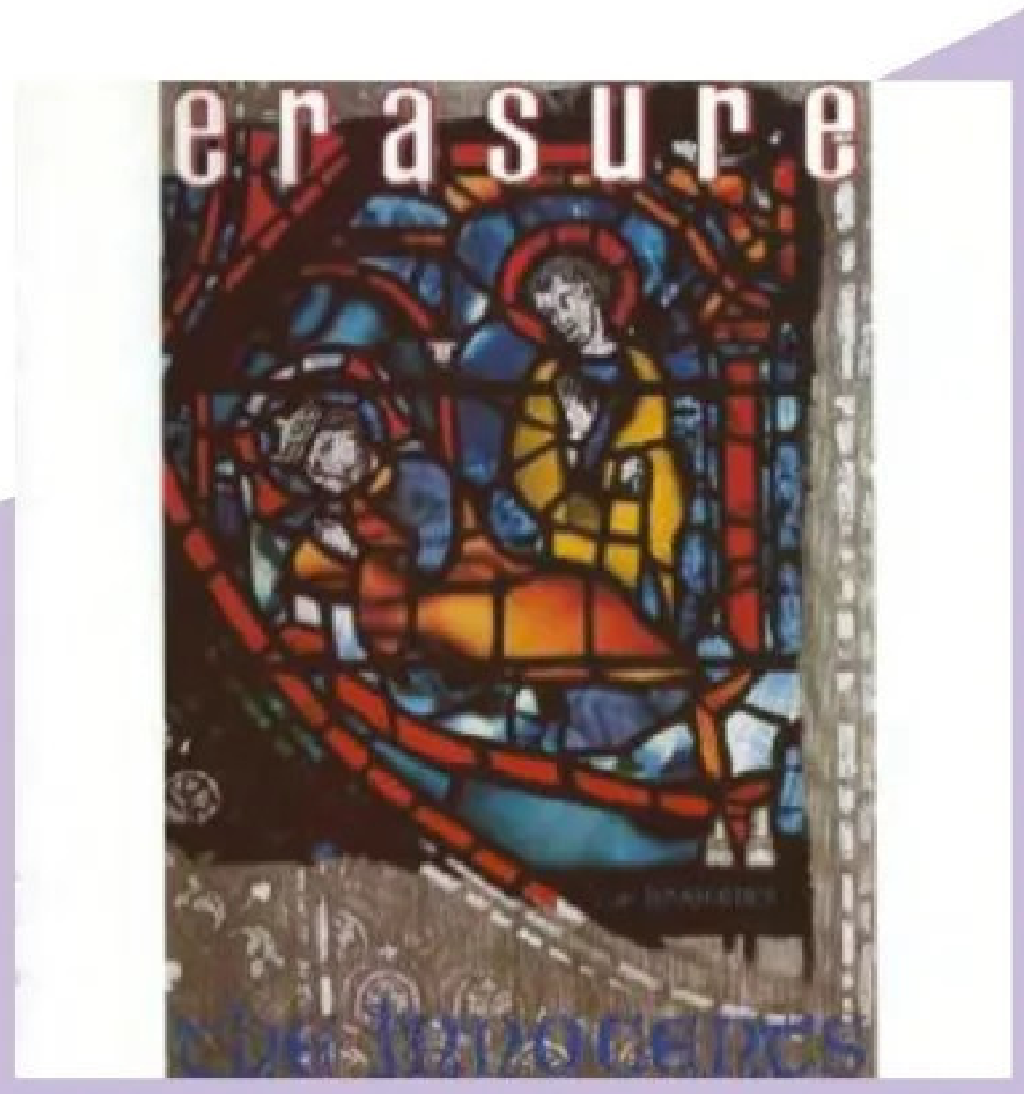
The final album from what Numan himself dubbed the 'machine' part of his career, *Telekon* brought guitars back to work alongside his robotic, synthetic sound. Most of all, *Telekon* proves that singers don't have to be singers, as Numan's voice shone in short, sharp, android-like attacks such as on the chorus for *We Are Glass.*

### Power, Corruption & Lies

New Order

1983

Following their *Movement album*, New Order dug even further into the electronic scene, their love for keyboards and catchy beats bringing rock energy to the dance scene. There was a warmth to *Power, Corruption & Lies* that dance records sometimes lacked, which helped win new fans.



### The Innocents

Erasure

1988

If you could make a pure pop album using instruments lifted from dance music, *The Innocents* is probably what it would sound like. Opening track *A Little Respect* became the duo's biggest hit, with its titanic pop chorus wrapped up in a maelstrom of keyboards and drum machine beats that builds before the brilliant falsetto release.

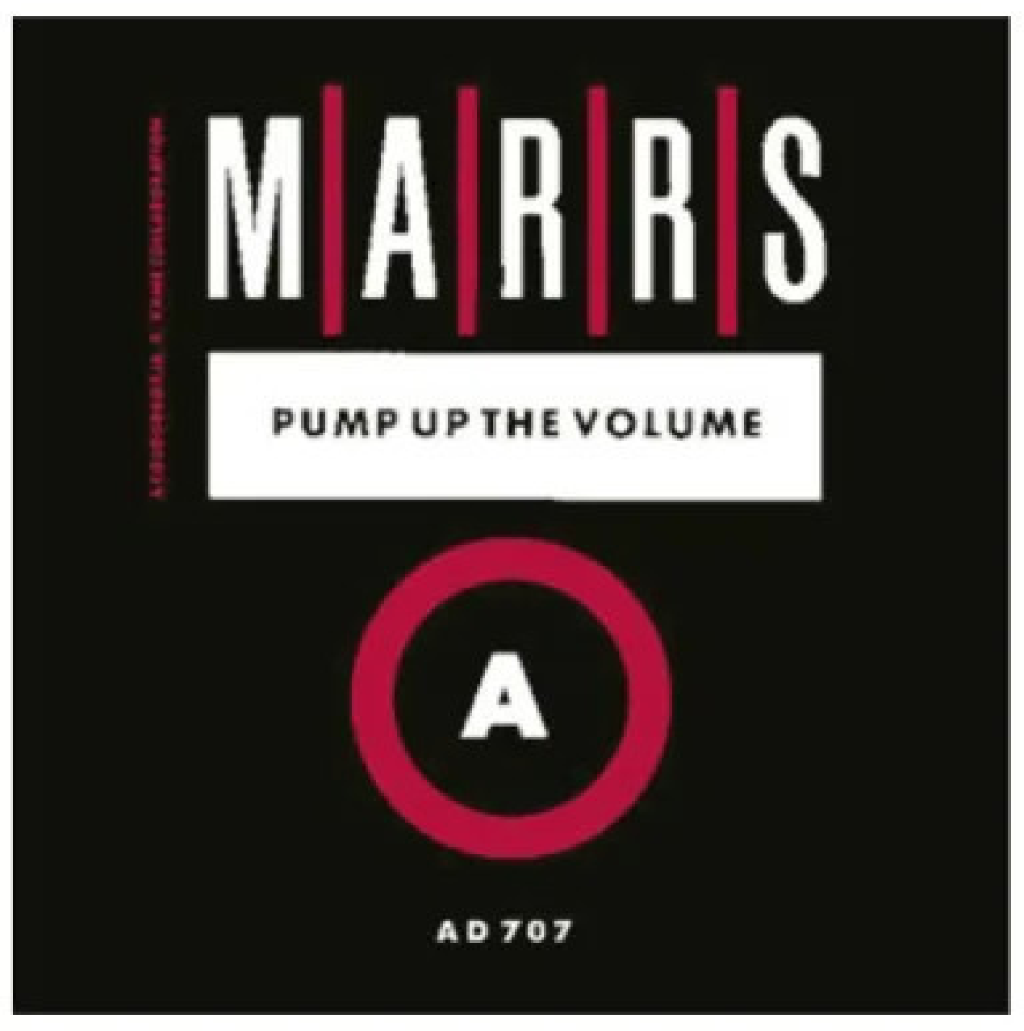
### Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret

Soft Cell

1981

A brash album that had both feet planted in clubland, everything about Soft Cell's best-known work screams '80s, from the album cover to the awful album title. That's part of its charm nowadays – it works as a perfect snapshot of dance music's growing influence and what the scene was like at that time.

## SONGS



### Pump Up The Volume

MARRS

1987

It's simple and that's why it works. *Pump Up The Volume* is a straightforward dance-floor beat, but it's the mayhem that surrounds it that gives this song its killer edge. DJ scratching, distorted sirens, piano chords and chopped up vocal samples all compete for the spotlight simultaneously on this completely manic track.

### Planet Rock

Afrika Bambaataa

1982

Although it wasn't a huge hit, this underground hip-hop tune paved the way for much of the electronic music that would follow in the '80s, particularly techno and house. It was the Roland TR-808 drum machine that gave the song its distinct sound and led to the proliferation of '808 beats' that would power electronic music for decades after.

### Whip It

Devo

1980

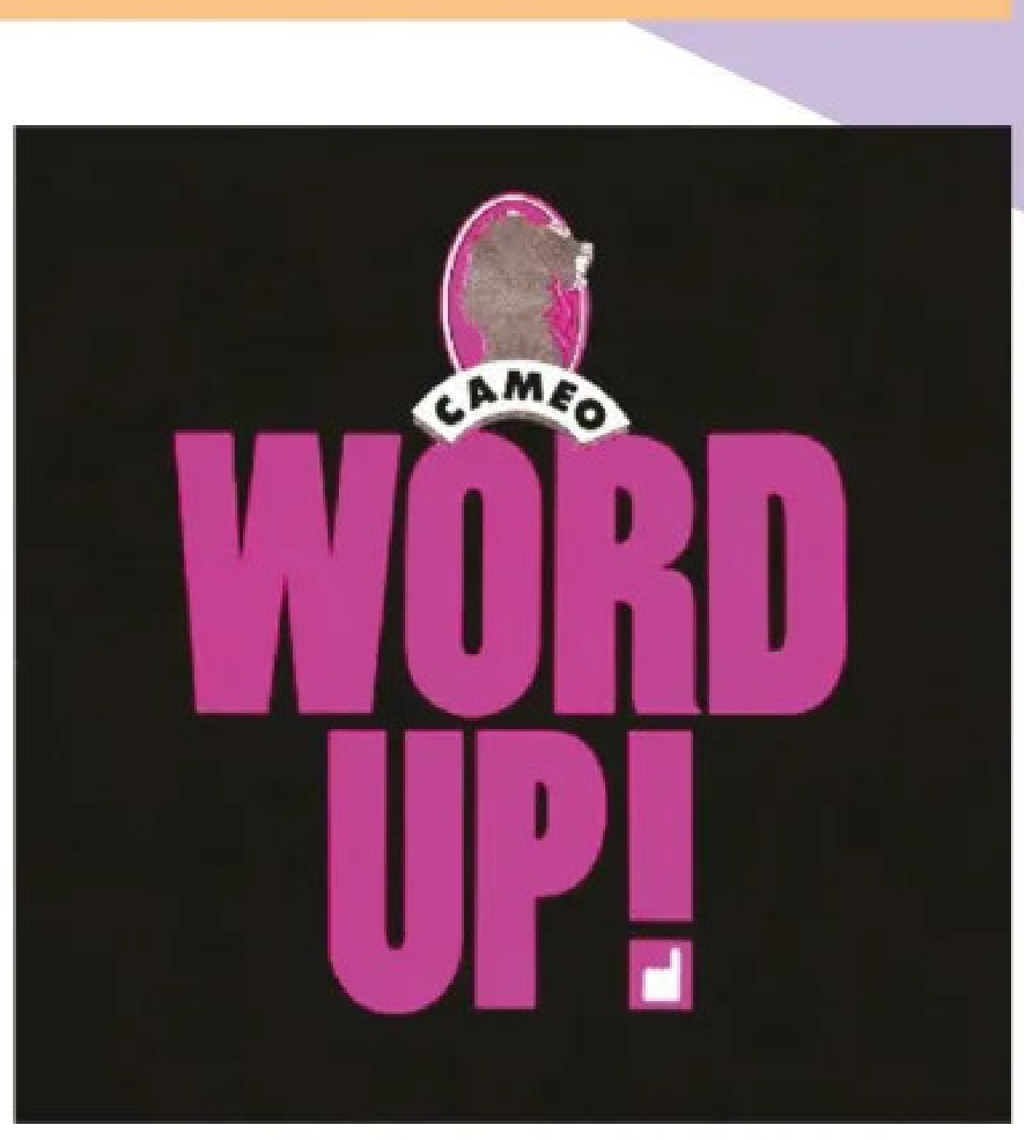
There's something very silly and very strange about Devo's unusual mixture of humour and dance-floor beats, but that's why this song works. *Whip It* is cheeky and sounds like it's been beamed here from another world. It's perhaps fitting that you're more likely to sing along to the Minimoog synthesizer riff than the chorus.

### Can You Feel It?

The Jacksons

1981

A bouncy, buoyant song, *Can You Feel It?* represents an important moment in music. It sounds like the last hurrah by disco, one last party before it's consumed by dance music. As such, it can't help but let some of dance's influences seep in, a potent cocktail which only adds to the feverish energy of the track.



### Word Up!

Cameo

1986

Cameo brought street-smart rapping to the dance rhythm of *Word Up!*, an unusual genre crossover that worked perfectly. The same can't be said for the music video, however, which featured various Lycra-clad dancers in American ghettos – not quite representative of what was happening in these locations at the time…

# HIP-HOP ICONS

If hip-hop took root in the '70s, then the '80s is when it really found its voice. Turntables and a microphone were much easier to afford than guitars and drums, leading to block parties in the US where DJs would play beats for rappers to battle each other on microphones. DJs eventually used two turntables to keep beats seamlessly playing for rappers, a setup that has mostly survived to this day. Eventually their turntable skill led to scratching – the distinctive sound of pushing records back and forth against the needle.

The first big names in hip-hop included Grandmaster Flash, Doug E Fresh and Kurtis Blow, all specialising in uplifting hip-hop that took its bass-heavy cues from the disco scene that preceded it.

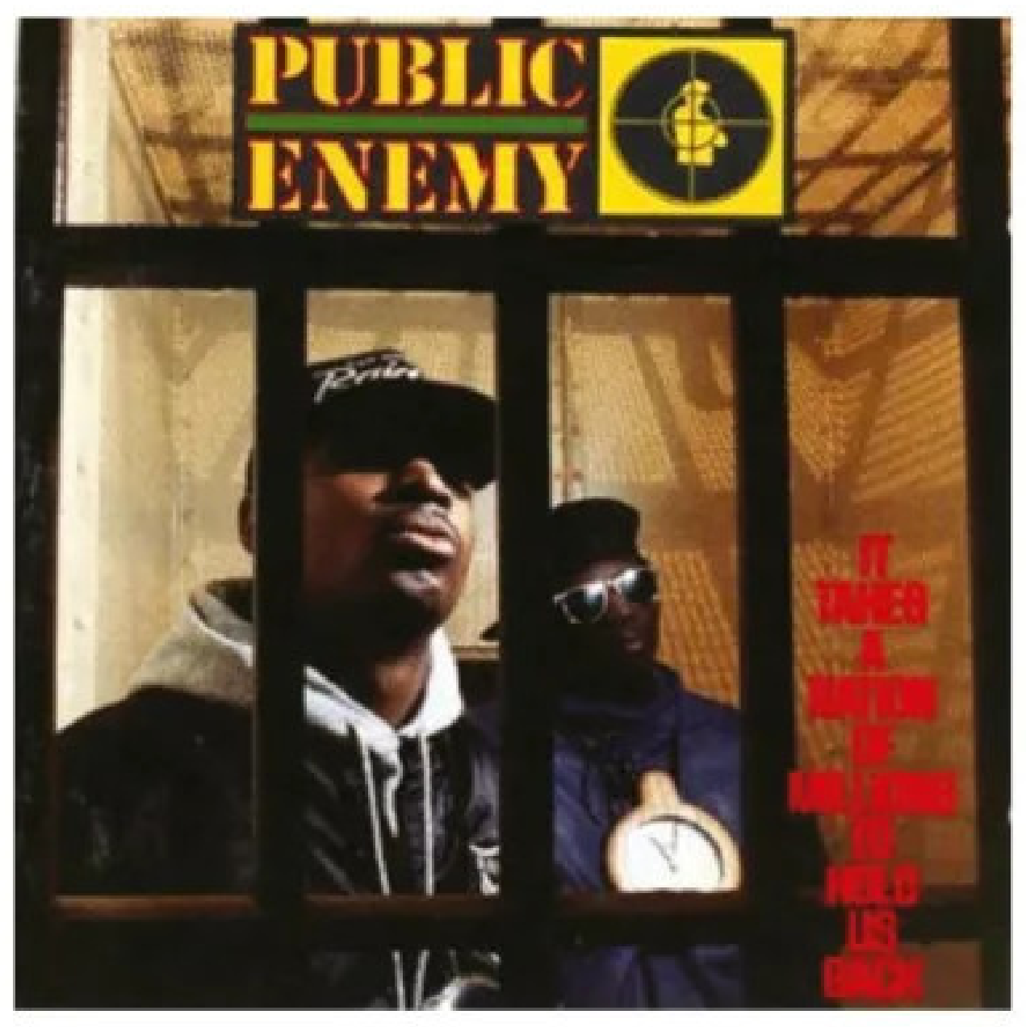
As the '80s drew to a close, a new form of hip-hop emerged – gangsta rap. This focused on the violent side of inner-city life. Led by N.W.A. and Ice-T, this controversial form of music was accused by the media of promoting crime, violence, racism and drug use, among others. However, as is often the case, media outrage only served to make this brand of hip-hop even more popular and a new era of rap was of born.

▲ **Public Enemy**

Hip-hop in the '70s was upbeat fare by The Sugarhill Gang and Grandmaster Flash. Public Enemy rewrote the genre rules, using politically charged rap songs to attack anyone from the government to Hollywood to radio. It wasn't just that Chuck D's message was powerful. With sirens, rock guitar, James Brown samples and Terminator X's DJ scratching all competing for volume, the music was chaotic, shocking and thrilling. No hip-hop band felt as important before Public Enemy or since, nor has any ever felt quite as dangerous.

## GREATEST HITS

### ALBUMS



### It Takes A Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back

Public Enemy

1988

Full of angry anthems that called out racism, corrupt governments and music industry exploitation, Chuck D's vocals added tension to the sonic chaos while Flava Flav's comedic ad-libs added temporary relief.

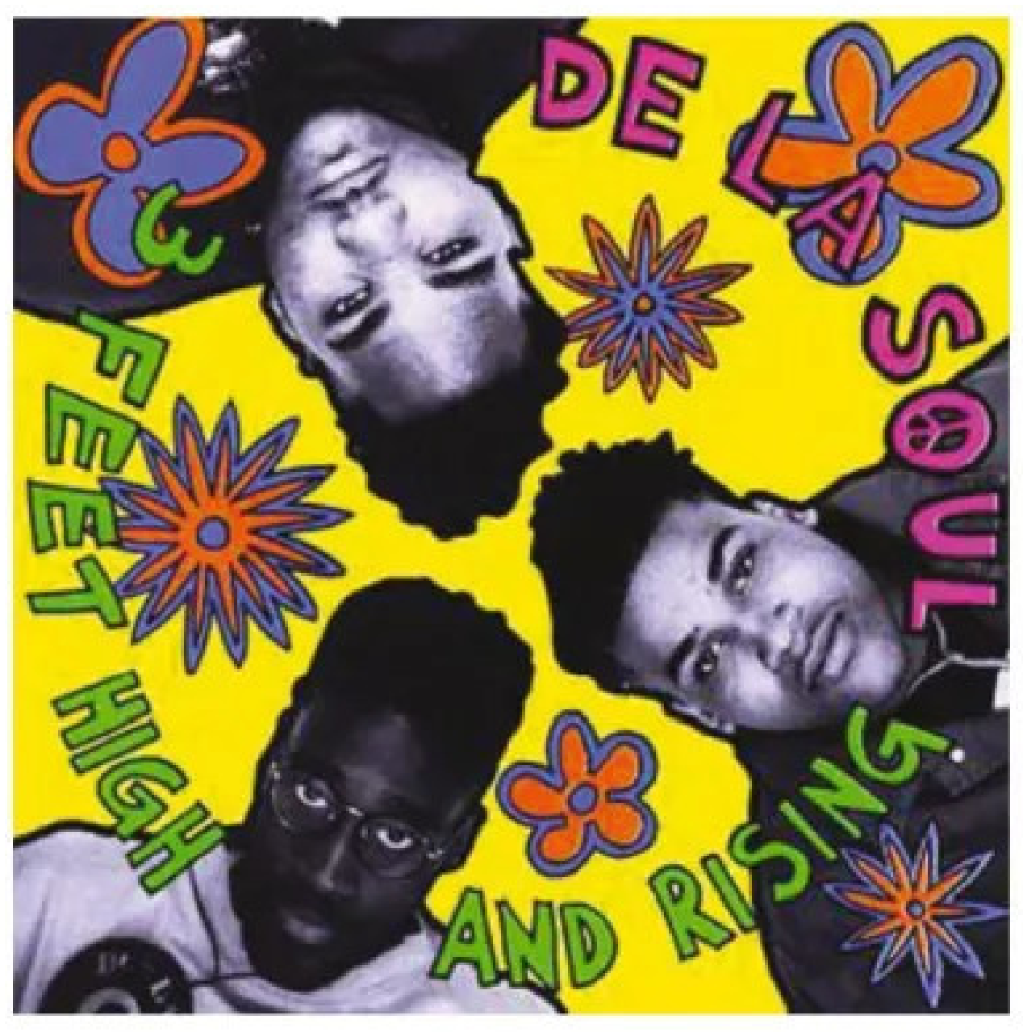
ERIC B. & RAKIM
PAID IN FULL

### Paid In Full

Eric B & Rakim

1987

Rakim's work on *Paid in Full* changed rapping forever, as he used internal rhyme and a considered style to deliver a relaxed, considered alternative to the high-energy shouting of LL Cool J and Chuck D. Eric B's sample-heavy approach set the stage perfectly for Rakim's innovative rap delivery, which was deliberate, pointed and almost jazz-like.



### 3 Feet High And Rising

De La Soul

1989

While gangsta rap's messages of violence and drugs were beginning to overshadow hip-hop, De La Soul stayed the course with their light, happy rhythms on *3 Feet High and Rising*. The record helped prove that there was enough room in the genre for both approaches to hip-hop to coexist.

BIG DADDY KANE
LONG LIVE THE KANE

### Long Live The Kane

Big Daddy Kane

1988

Big Daddy Kane's debut influenced a generation of rappers from Nas to The Notorious B.I.G. to Wu-Tang Clan's RZA, who all sampled his lyrics. It's now considered one of the best records to have emerged from hip-hop's golden era, with Big Daddy Kane's lyrical prowess and rapping skills the highlights.

N.W.A
PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT
"STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON"

### Straight Outta Compton

N.W.A.

1989

Ferocious and dangerous, *Straight Outta Compton* is the album that kicked the doors wide open for gangsta rap. Its blaring sirens, gunshots and furious vocals shocked audiences around the world – some for the better, and some for the worse. Its influence is still being felt today, such as in Britain's grime music.

**▲ Beastie Boys**

Beastie Boys started life as a hardcore punk band before reinventing themselves as rap party boys, eventually touring with Run DMC and LL Cool J. Their first full rap album, *Licensed to Ill,* became the bestselling album in the genre in the '80s, propelled by singles *(You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)* and *No Sleep till Brooklyn. Having fully escaped their hardcore punk roots, the Beastie Boys returned to the studio and emerged with a mature* sound on *Paul's Boutique.* The sample-heavy approach won critics over and it's considered one of the best albums of the '80s.

RUN DMC
KING OF ROCK
CREW
MTV
TELEVISION

**▲ Run DMC**

Run DMC stamped their mark on the '80s with their distinctive sound, look and personalities. The band was made up of two MCs ('Run' and 'D.M.C.') and a DJ ('Jam Master Jay'), proving that you didn't have to be one or the other in order to find success. With their gold chains, fedoras and all-black ensemble, there was no mistaking how they looked either. Their self-titled debut was rough around the edges, but its collection of catchy songs saw Run DMC burrow their way into the music mainstream. Along the way, they helped establish hip-hop as a force to be reckoned with.

## SONGS

IT'S LIKE THAT
Run DMC
SUCKER M.C.'S (KRUSH-GROOVE 1)

### It's Like That

Run DMC

1984

The rough production on this track couldn't hold back the pure, unadultered energy of Run and DMC trading rhymes about making money and getting through life. Even though it sounds spare today, *It's Like That* was one of the defining hip-hop songs of the era, showing how message and music could work together to create an exceptional overall package.

BEASTIE BOYS
(YOU GOTTA) FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT (TO PARTY!)

### (You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)

Beastie Boys

1986

The frat-boy anthem of the '80s, *Fight For Your Right* caught Beastie Boys between their hardcore punk roots and newfound hip-hop style, with the raw energy of both genres. There was nothing clever or smart about this song, but it was a *lot* of fun.

KURTIS BLOW
"THE BREAKS"
VOCAL
b/w
"THE BREAKS"
(INSTRUMENTAL/Do it yourself!)
12" SINGLE

### The Breaks

Kurtis Blow

1980

A song that pointedly kept one foot in the dying disco era, *The Breaks* has hand claps, funky bass and crowds cheering. Tying all those elements together is Kurtis Blow's rapping, with infectious energy that lifts the song and has made it a mainstay on party playlists ever since its release. Put it on now, decades later, and it's near impossible not to start moving.

Sugar Hill
SH-584-A
THE MESSAGE
GRAND MASTER FLASH & THE FURIOUS FIVE
Feat.: MELLE MEL & DUKE BOOTEE

### The Message

Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

1982

"It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder how I keep from going under." *The Message* marked an important moment in hip-hop. It proved there was more to the genre than party anthems, as it highlighted the realities of everyday inner-city life ("junkies in the alley with a baseball bat").

MAN PARRISH
MAN PARRISH
HIP HOP, BE BOP (DON'T STOP)

### Hip Hop, Be Bop (Don't Stop)

Man Parrish

1982

One of the big releases in the early years of hip-hop, it doesn't have any rapping, with sparse vocals and a "don't stop" sample punctuating the song. However, its woozy mix of disco bass, electrobeats and keyboards set an early template for others in the genre to follow.

# R&B

Rhythm and blues, known as R&B, has evolved more than any other genre. Even its meaning has evolved, depending on the era. It covered everything from soul and gospel music to bands like The Rolling Stones and The Who. By the time the '80s arrived, R&B was considered a blanket term for soul, funk and disco, particularly as the arrival of hip-hop began to squeeze R&B from a strong commercial genre into something more niche with only a few shining lights truly breaking through.

There were the old guard whose careers were already established and had to reinvent themselves to stay relevant, such as Aretha Franklin going for a younger sound with *Who's Zoomin' Who?*, Chaka Khan bringing dance influence into her music and Marvin Gaye severing his ties with Motown.

But it was the new artists coming through who made R&B exciting in the '80s – Whitney Houston, Luther Vandross, Bobby Brown, Mariah Carey. Whether you considered it to be soul, funk, disco or something else entirely, there was no denying the talents of those singers.

▲ **Marvin Gaye**

Marvin Gaye was already a household name before the '80s, thanks to his work as a young singer on Motown hits like *I Heard It Through the Grapevine.* By the early '80s he had moved away from his roots to become an influential voice in R&B, releasing *Midnight Love* and its huge single *Sexual Healing.* He would hit the headlines again a few years later when he was killed by his own father. But while his career was cut short, he still played a huge role in shaping R&B, helping it evolve into the genre we know today.

# ICONS

▲ **Whitney Houston**

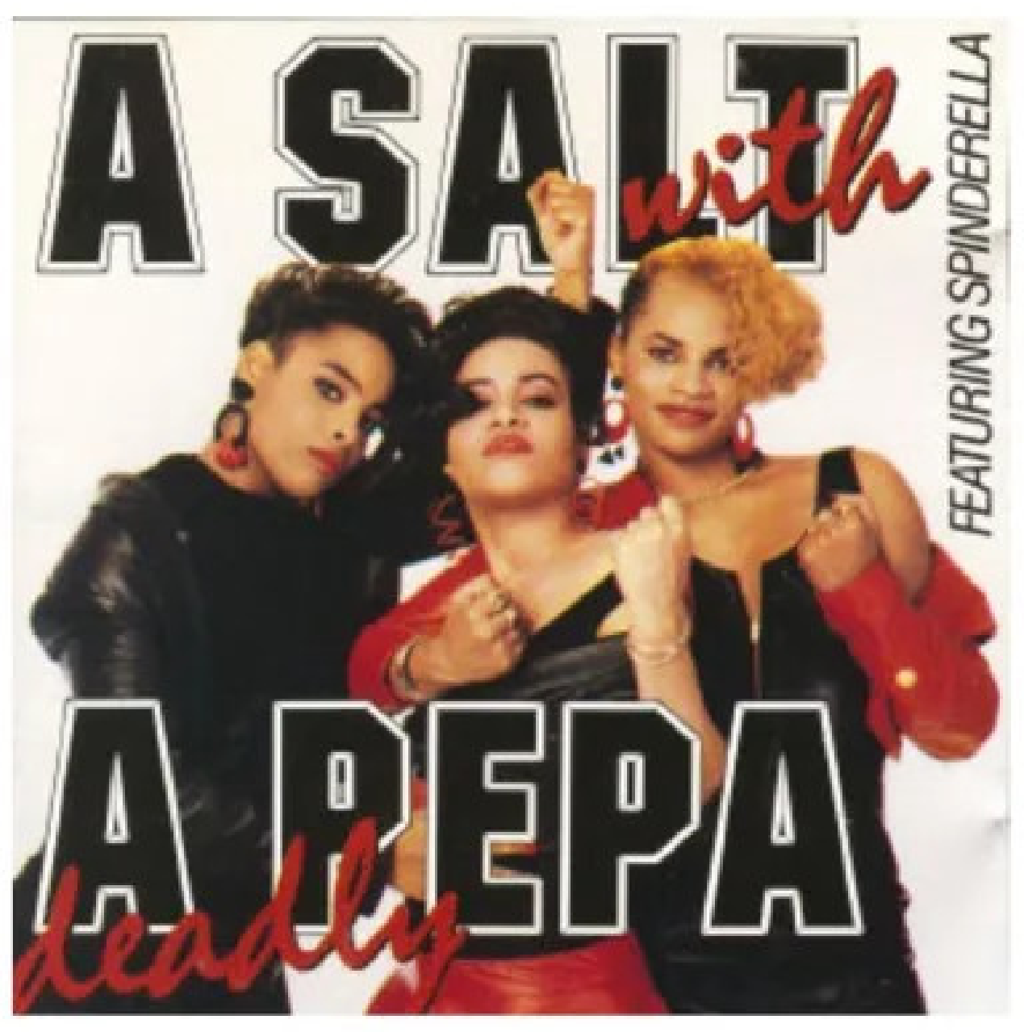
Describe Whitney Houston as the greatest female vocalist of all time and the only argument you'd get (if any) would probably be from ardent Mariah Carey fans. Music producers quickly realised that her songs shouldn't be complex numbers with awkward tempo changes and structure but rather, should serve as platforms for Houston to show off her incredible vocal range that few could match. That same thinking extended to her music videos, live performances and image – put the focus on her incredible voice and let that do the work. A true diva who is sadly missed.

▲ **Salt-N-Pepa**

The trio – two rappers and a DJ – started life as one of the first ever all-female rap groups, becoming one of the few female voices in a genre that was increasingly lurching towards objectification and incessant male bragging. Having established themselves in hip-hop through their breakout single *Push It,* Salt-N-Pepa dialled back the energy and became just as well known for their superb R&B output through songs like *Shake Your Thang.* Without the influential Salt-N-Pepa paving the way, it's debatable whether we would have had groups like TLC and Destiny's Child.

# GREATEST HITS

## ALBUMS



### A Salt With A Deadly Pepa

Salt-N-Pepa

1988

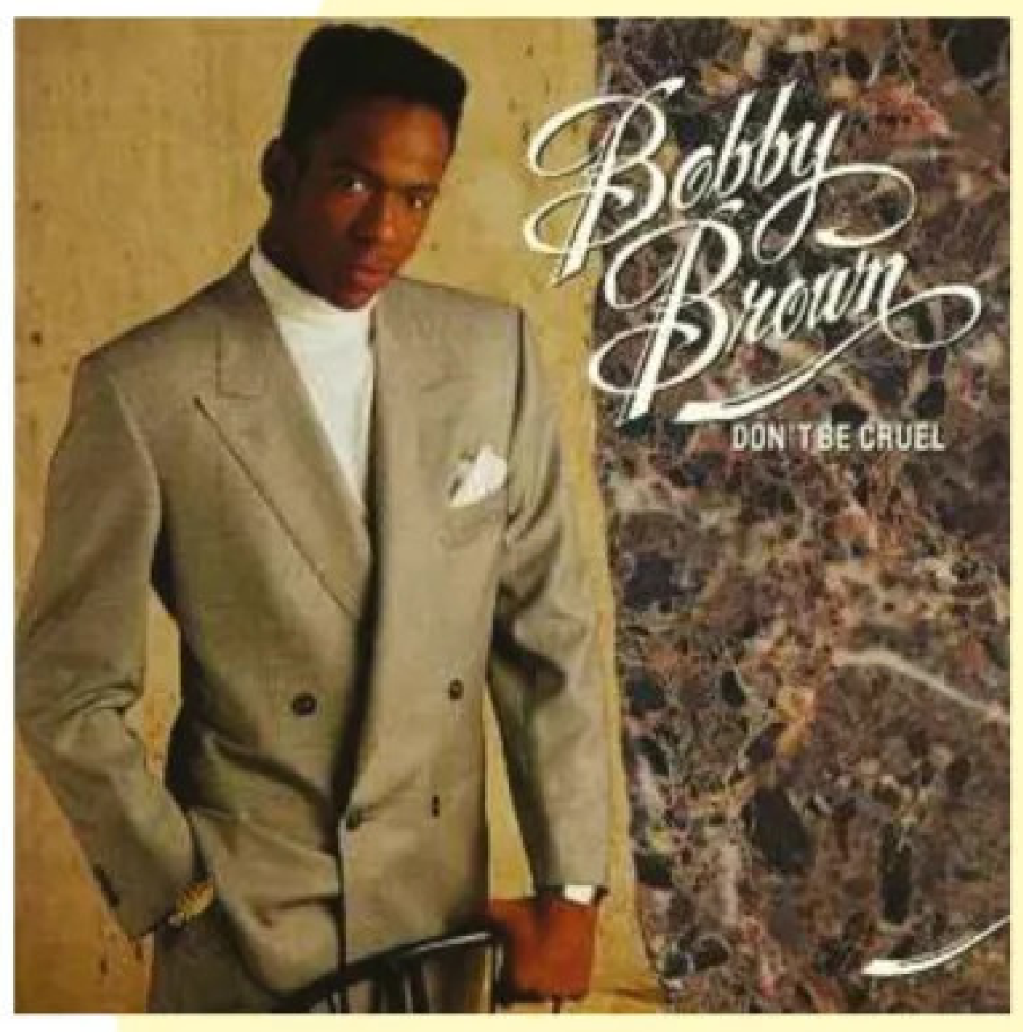
This was the album that proved there was more to Salt-N-Pepa than just a hit single. *Shake Your Thang* and *Get Up Everybody (Get Up)* were R&B hits through and through, establishing the trio as the prototype female R&B group for SWV and Destiny's Child to later follow.

### Rhythm Nation: 1814

Janet Jackson

1989

The album that finally saw her known as Janet Jackson rather than simply being Michael's sister, it touched on a variety of musical styles, from new jack swing to industrial dance. Janet Jackson's voice was the glue that held all these musical ideas together, and *Rhythm Nation* remains her best work.

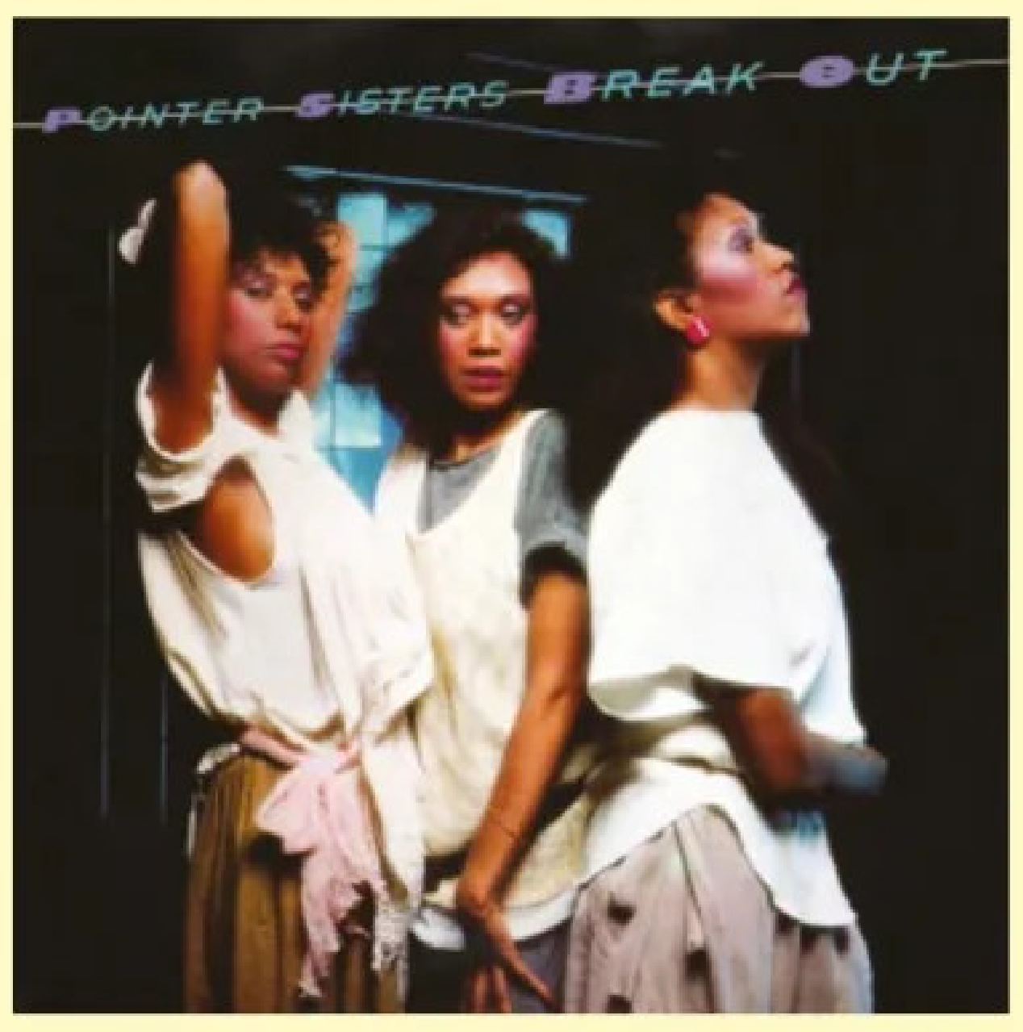


### Don't Be Cruel

Bobby Brown

1988

When his debut album stalled in the charts, Bobby Brown decided to shed his bubble-gum image for the follow-up *Don't Be Cruel*. The new aggression, raw sex appeal and subtle air of menace in his demeanour made the album an instant hit, while single *My Prerogative* became his first number one.



### Break Out

Pointer Sisters

1983

On the biggest album of their illustrious career, the Pointer Sisters brought an electro influence into their music which managed to mesh perfectly with their established R&B work. Unsurprisingly, almost every single from this album was a hit, from *Jump (For My Love)* to a remix of *I'm So Excited.*

### Who's Zoomin' Who?

Aretha Franklin

1985

It'd be easy to assume Aretha Franklin would start to take her foot off the gas for *Who's Zoomin' Who?*, what was then her 33rd studio album. Instead, it became the most successful album of her career, as she proved beyond all doubt that there was plenty of life left in her iconic vocals.

## SONGS

### Sexual Healing

Marvin Gaye

1982

The buttery smooth vocals of Marvin Gaye make any of his songs a joy to listen to, but no song was bigger or more joyful, then or now, than *Sexual Healing*. Marvin Gaye exposed his soul and we all fell in love, the slow jam of the track itself being the perfect vehicle for his incredible voice.

### I Feel For You

Chaka Khan

1984

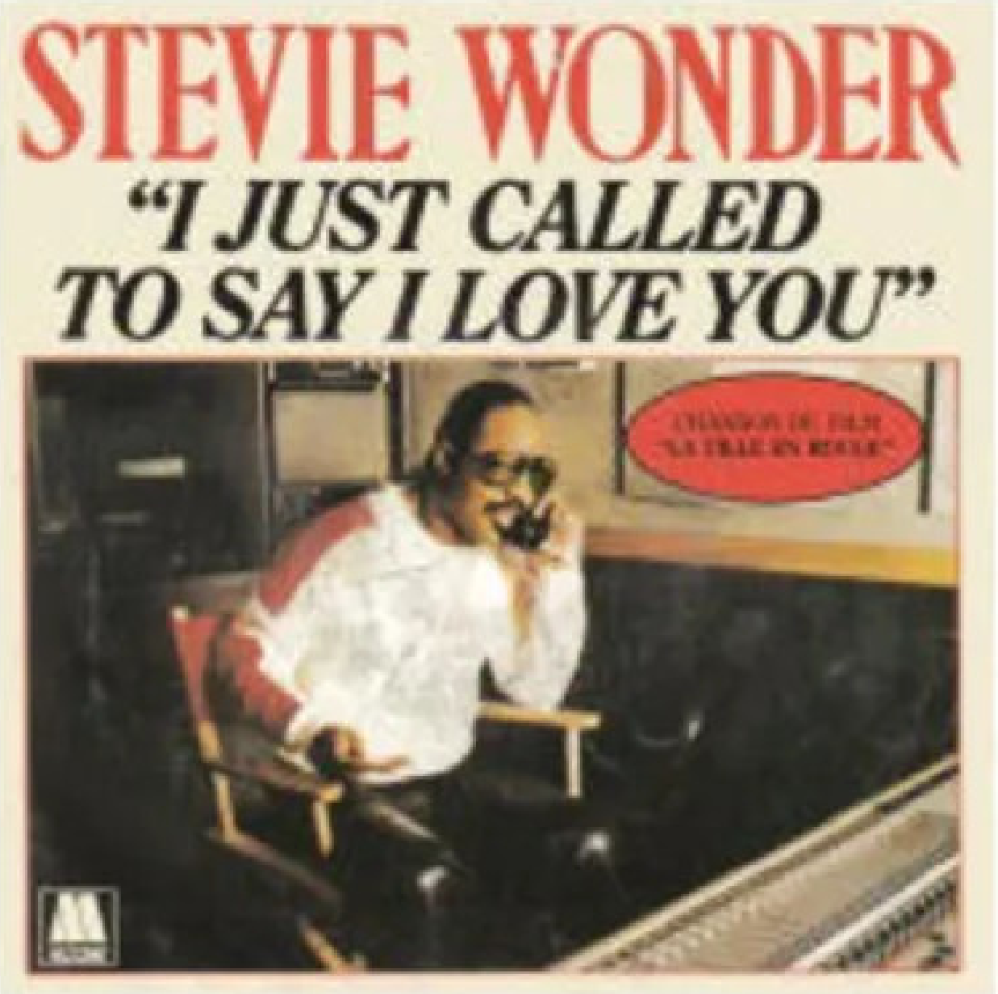
*I Feel For You* shows how music was being drawn into the irresistible pull of the developing electronic scene. It brought the best elements of R&B together with electronic music's decidely more clinical production, Chaka Khan's powerful voice the key element, bringing the two disparate styles together with consummate ease.

### The Greatest Love Of All

Whitney Houston

1986

Whitney Houston had already found success with songs like *Saving All My Love for You* but this was the song that announced her as an elite talent to the world. It was a slow number, where production stood aside while Houston's powerful vocals carried her onto radio airwaves around the world.



### I Just Called To Say I Love You

Stevie Wonder

1984

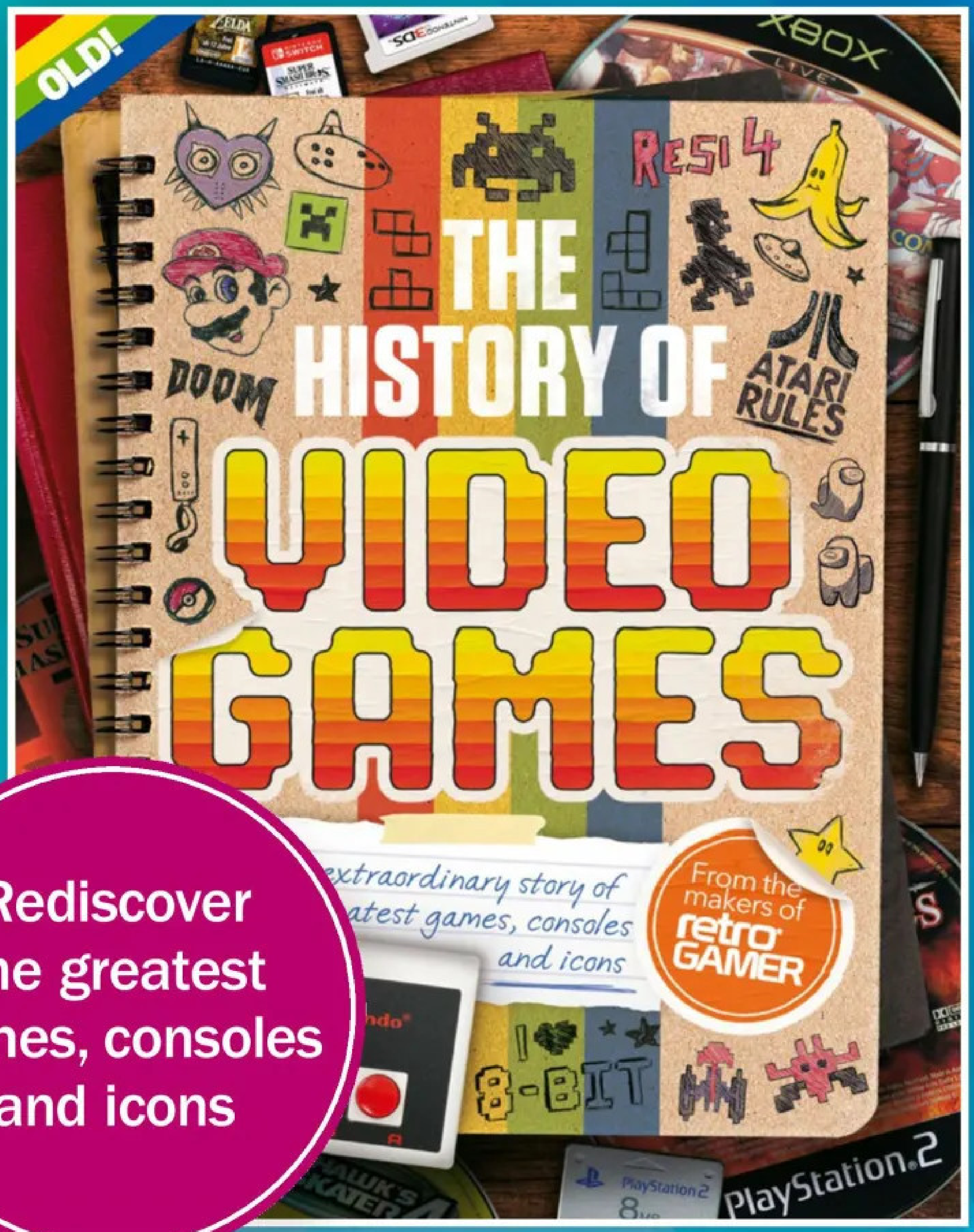
Stevie Wonder's distinctive brand of music draws on so many elements – R&B, Motown, swing, pop. Yet no matter how many influences he brings together, he manages to blend them into a smooth whole, as he effortlessly proves on this song.

### Girl You Know It's True

Milli Vanilli

1988

The song that showed the changing landscape of the music industry, the track skipped during a live performance and exposed the fakery behind the duo. Lip-syncing nowadays barely raises an eyebrow, but back then it felt like we had caught a magician out mid-trick.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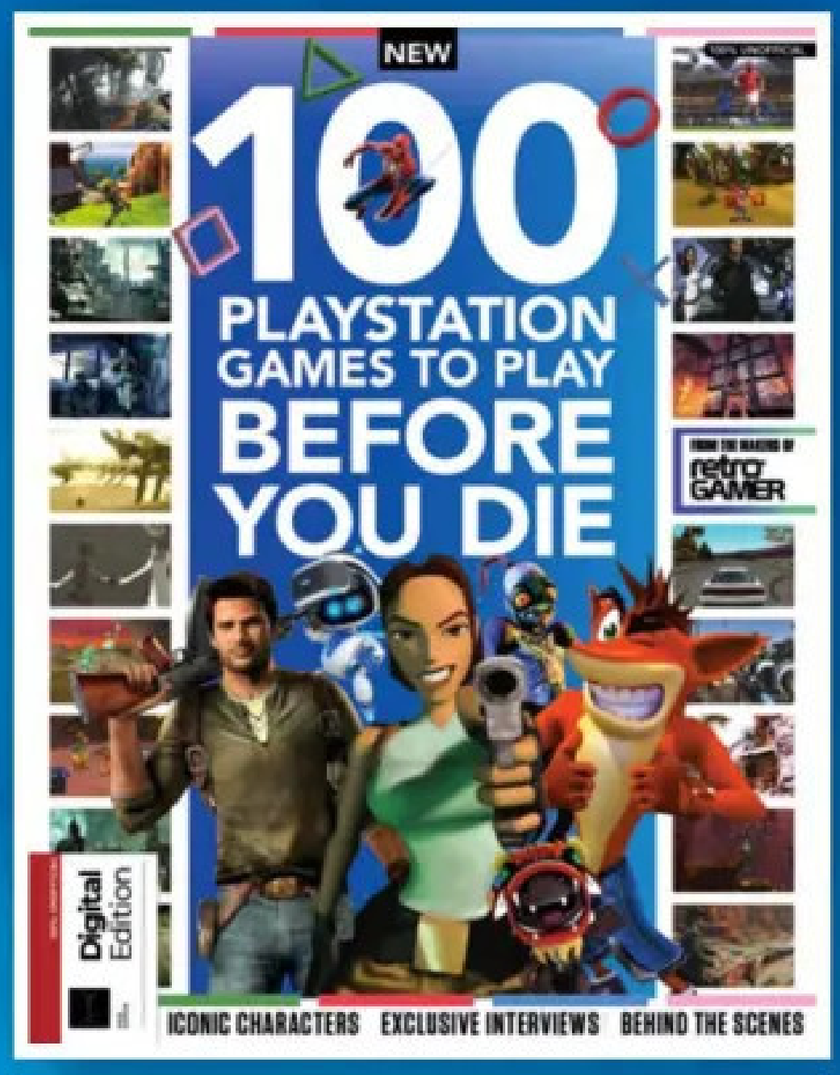
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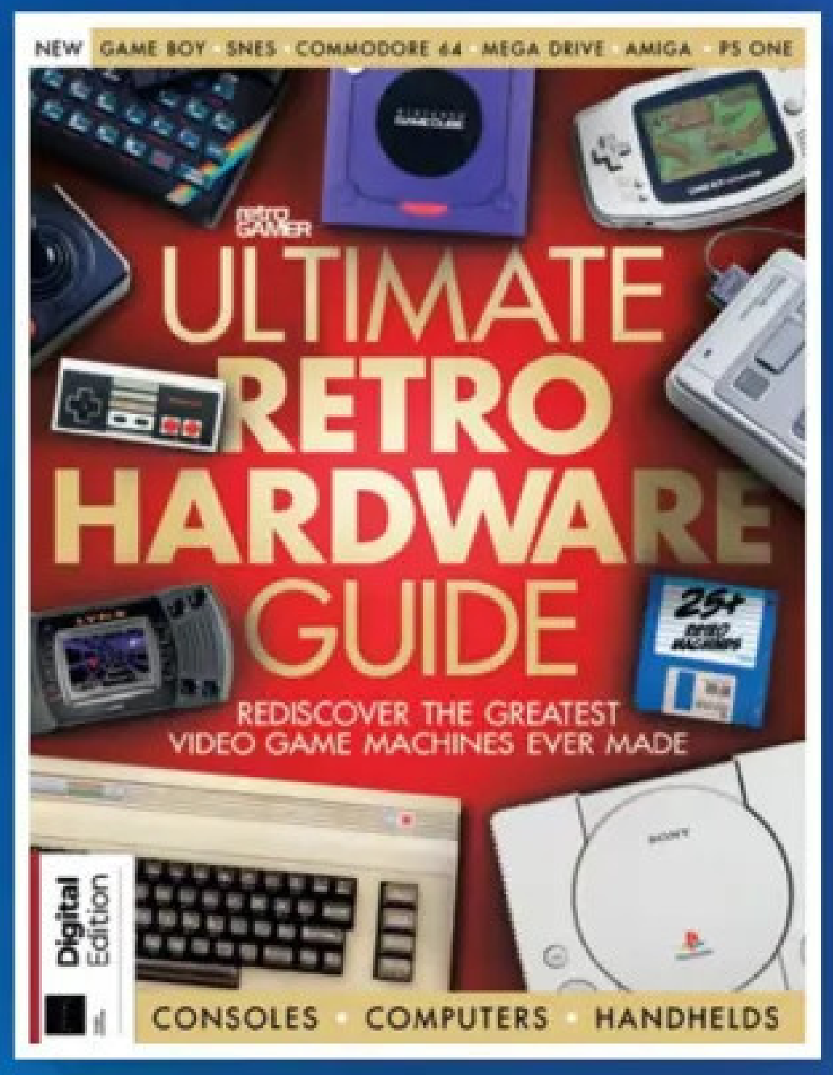
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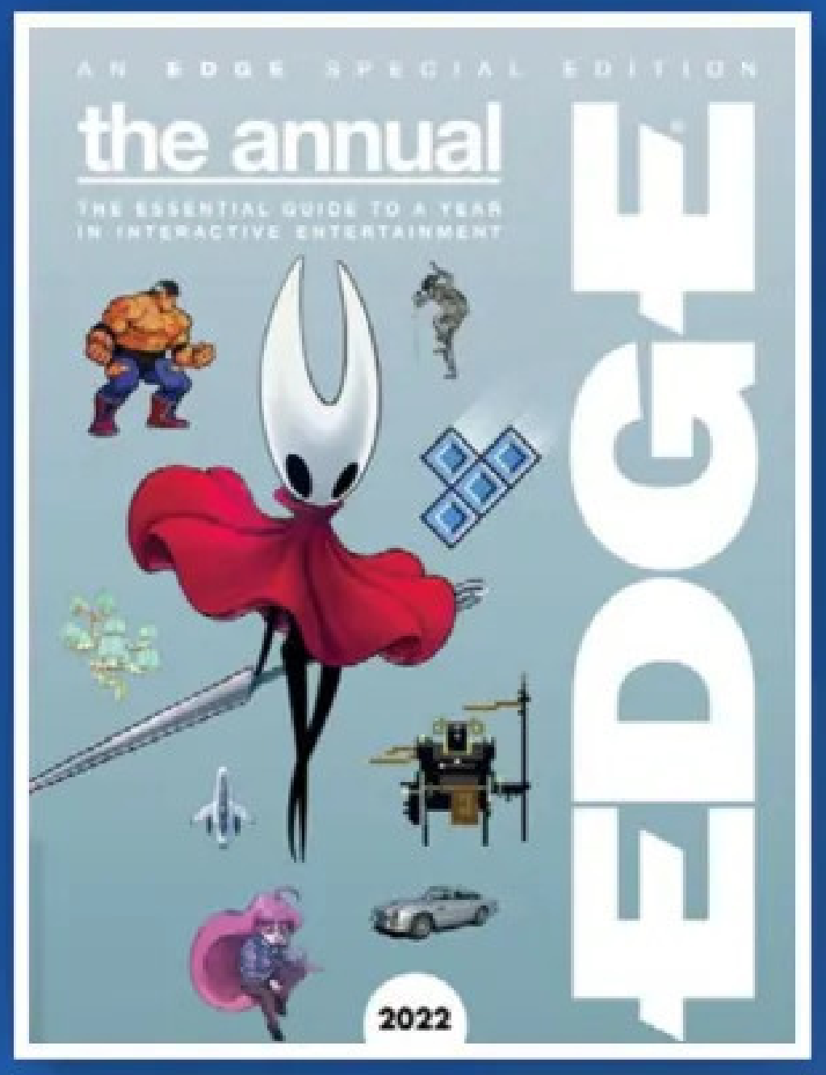
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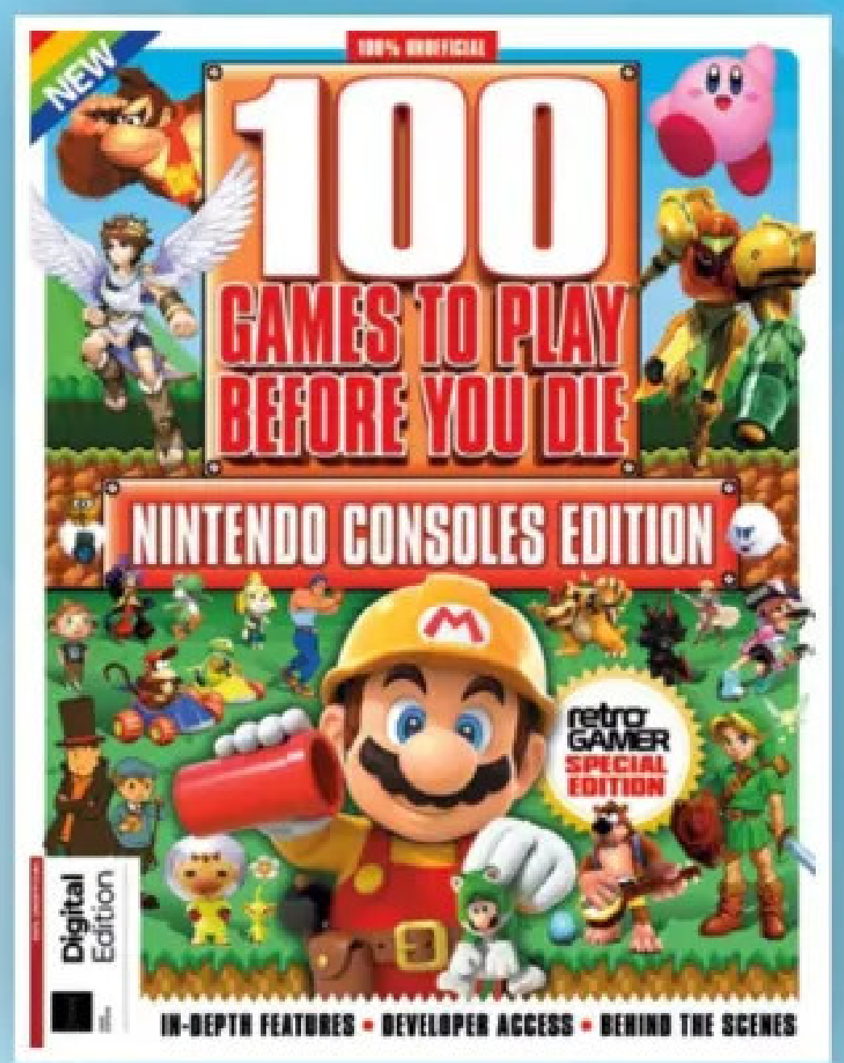
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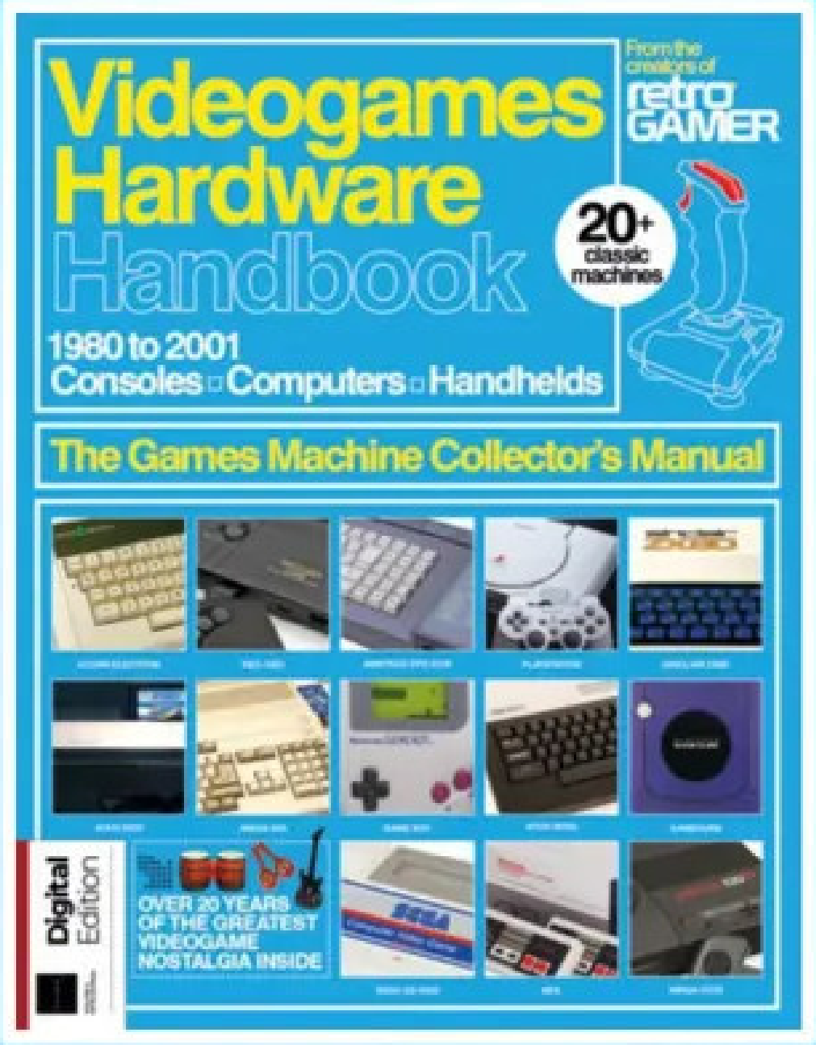
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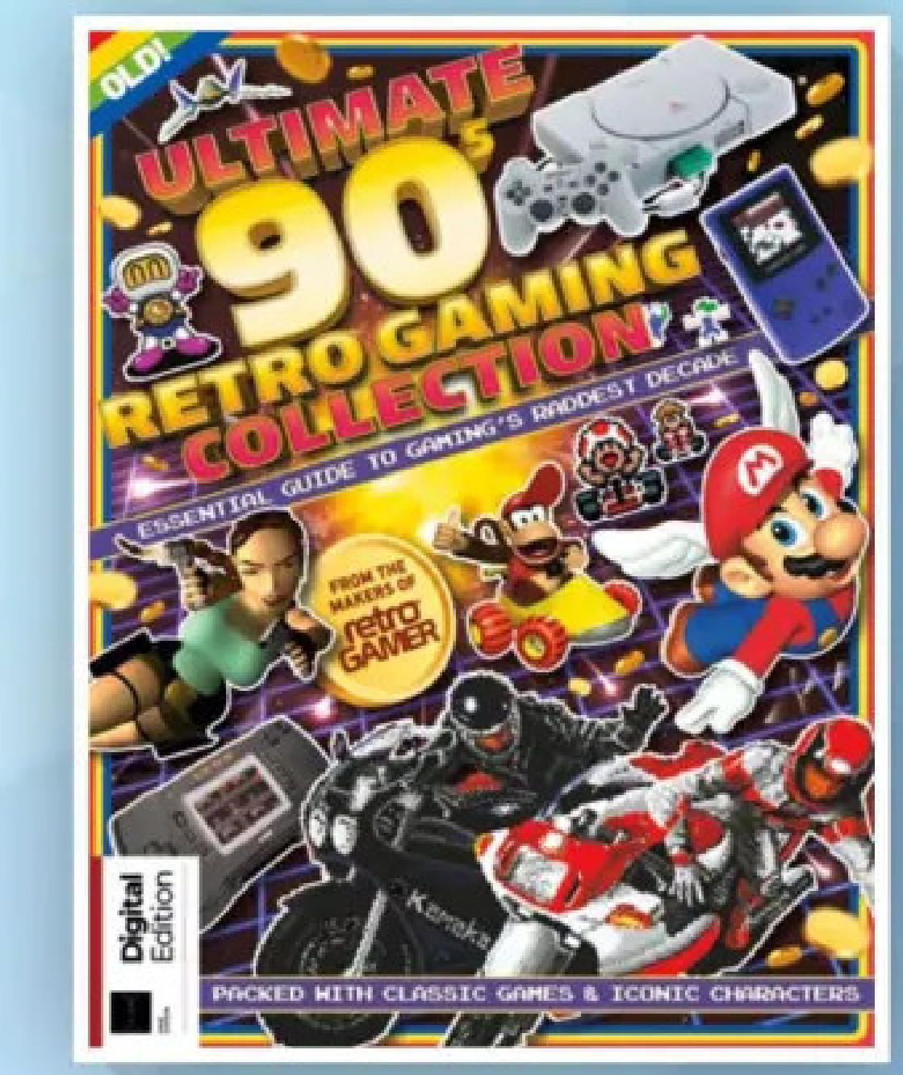
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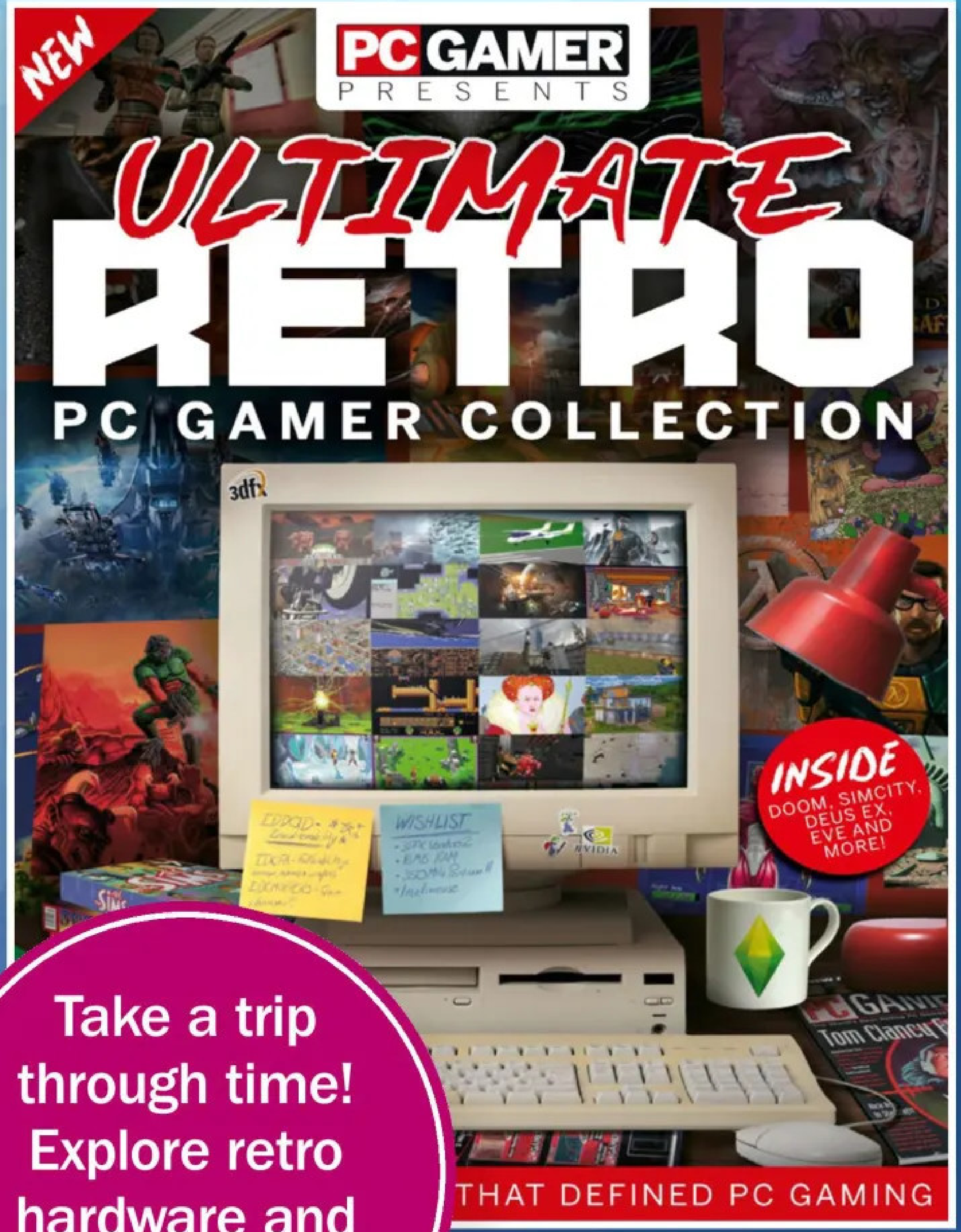
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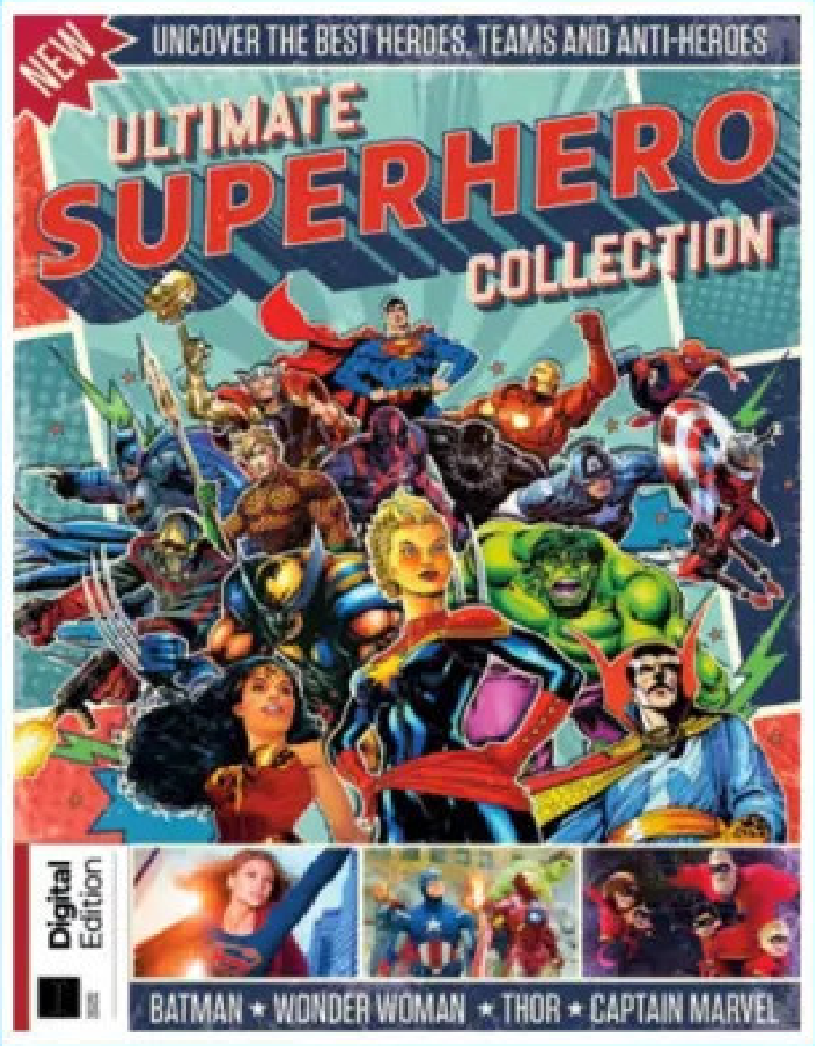
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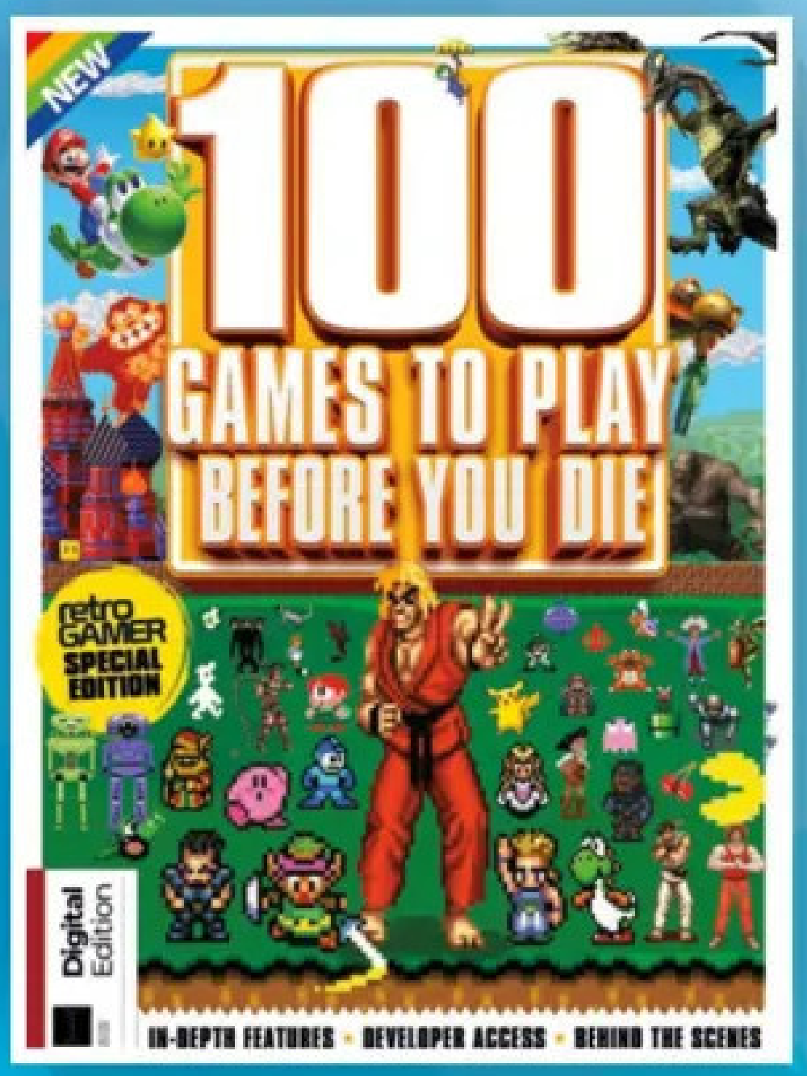
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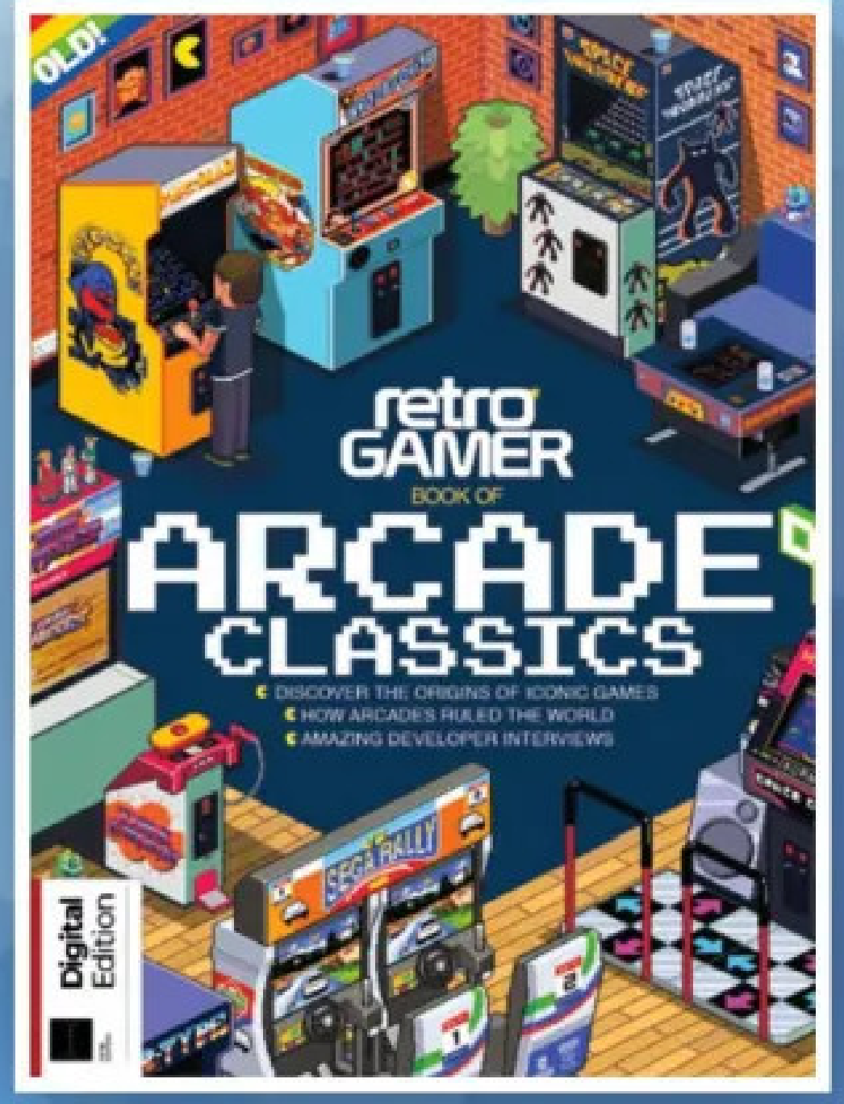
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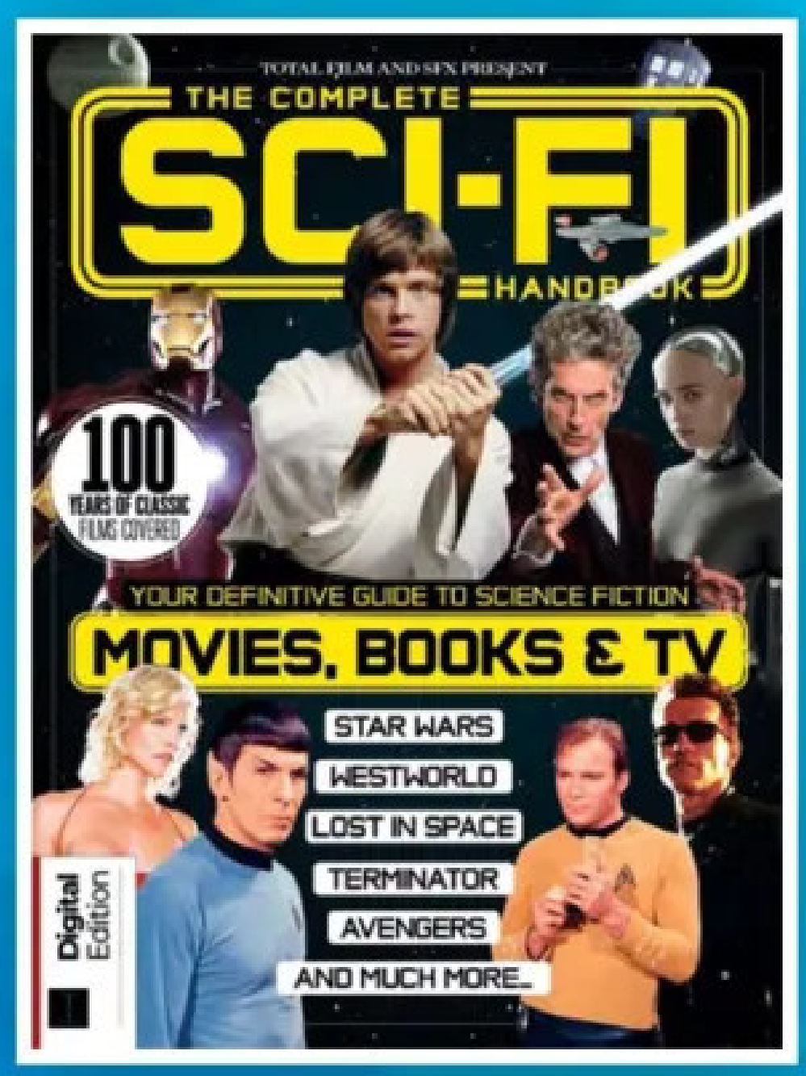
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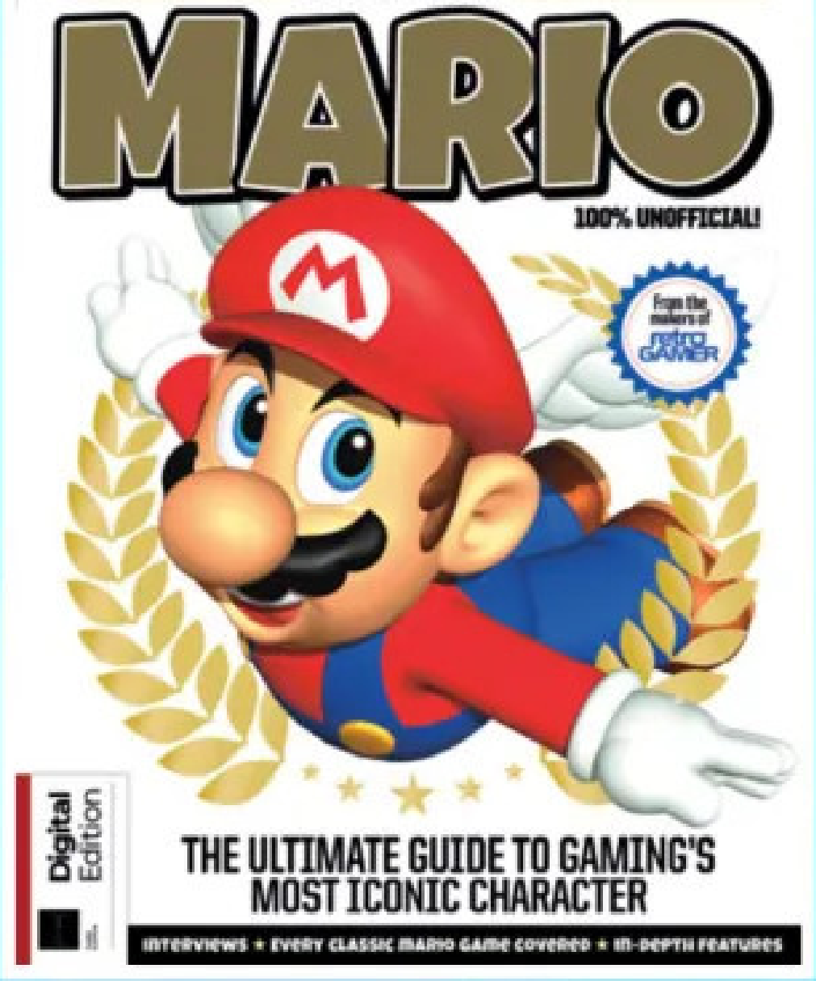
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Volume 2

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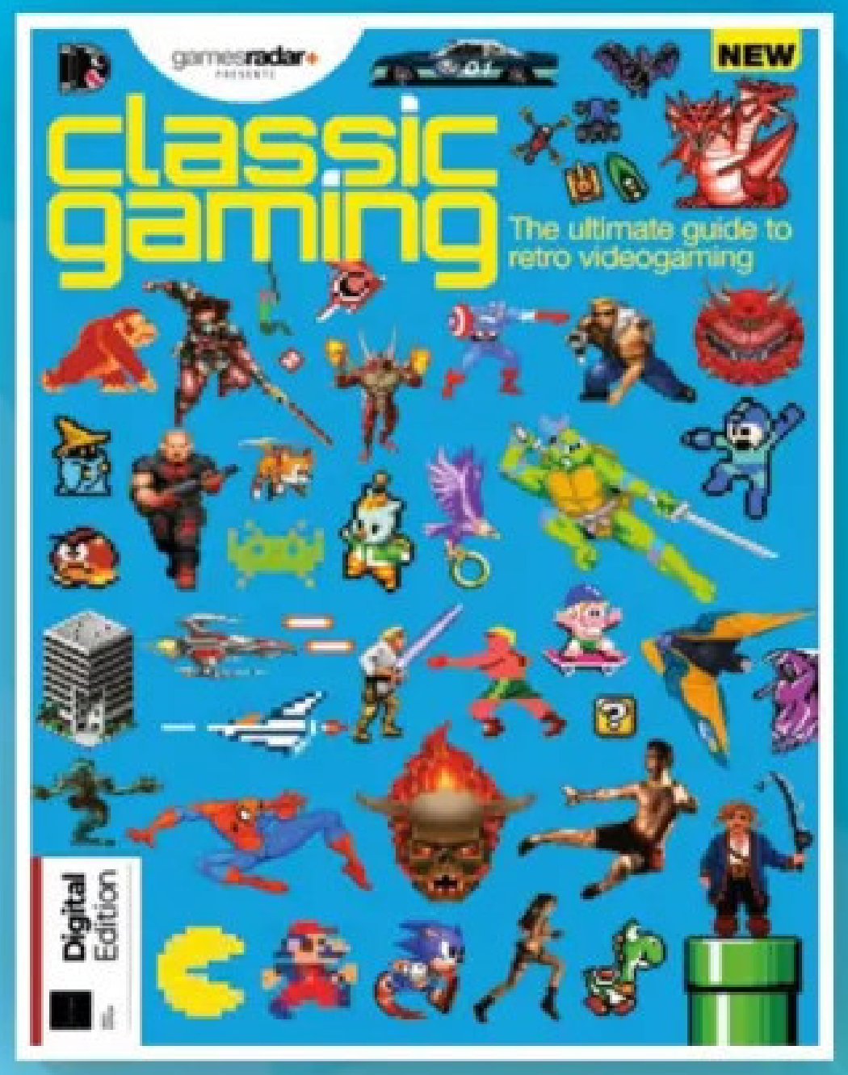
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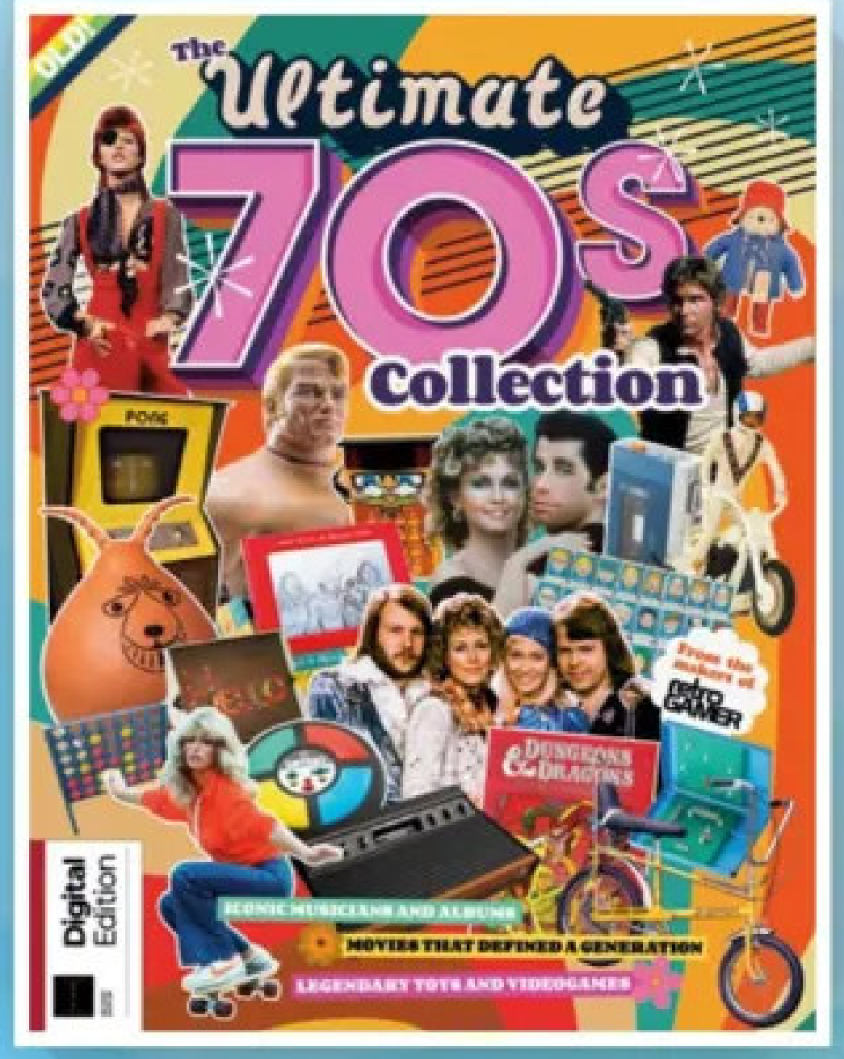
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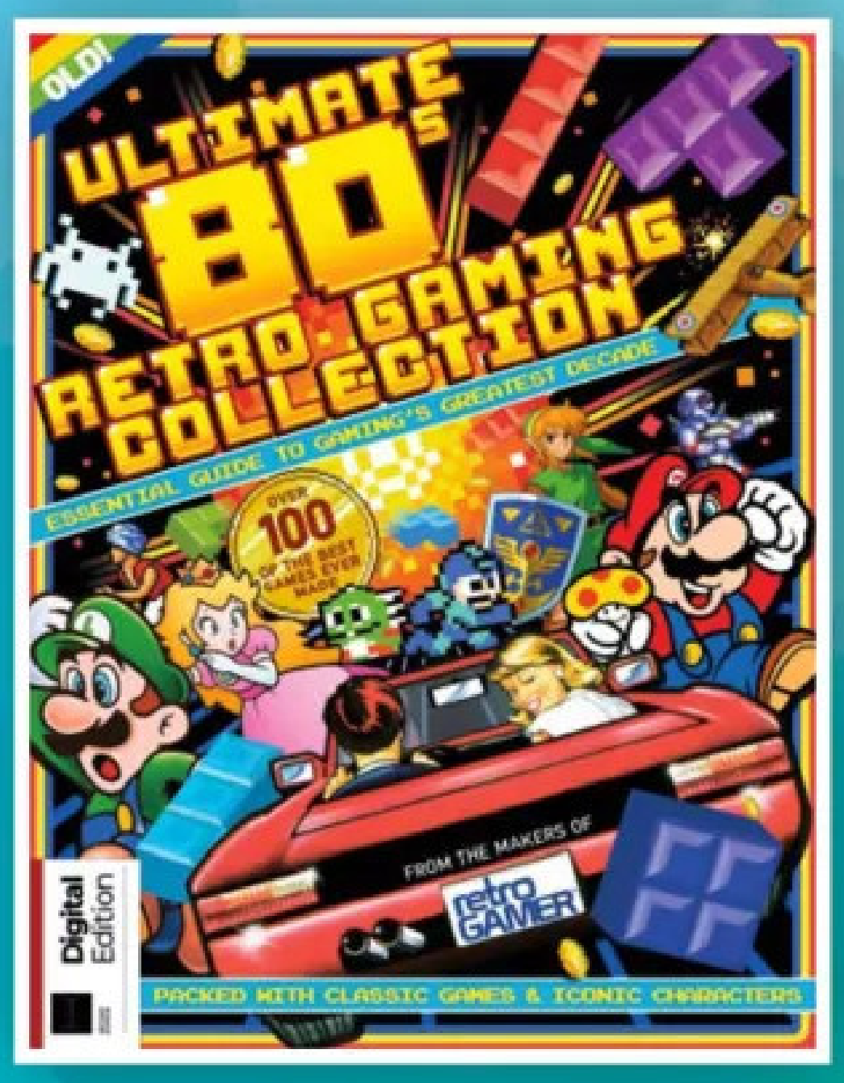
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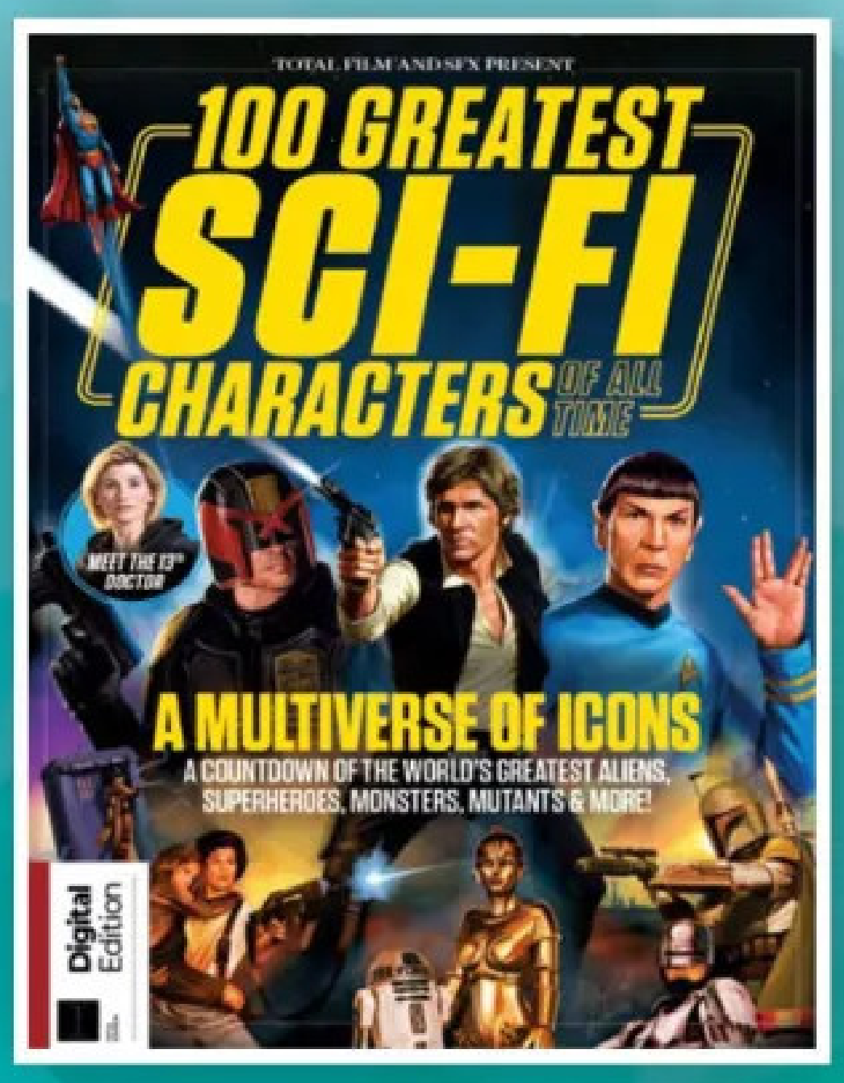
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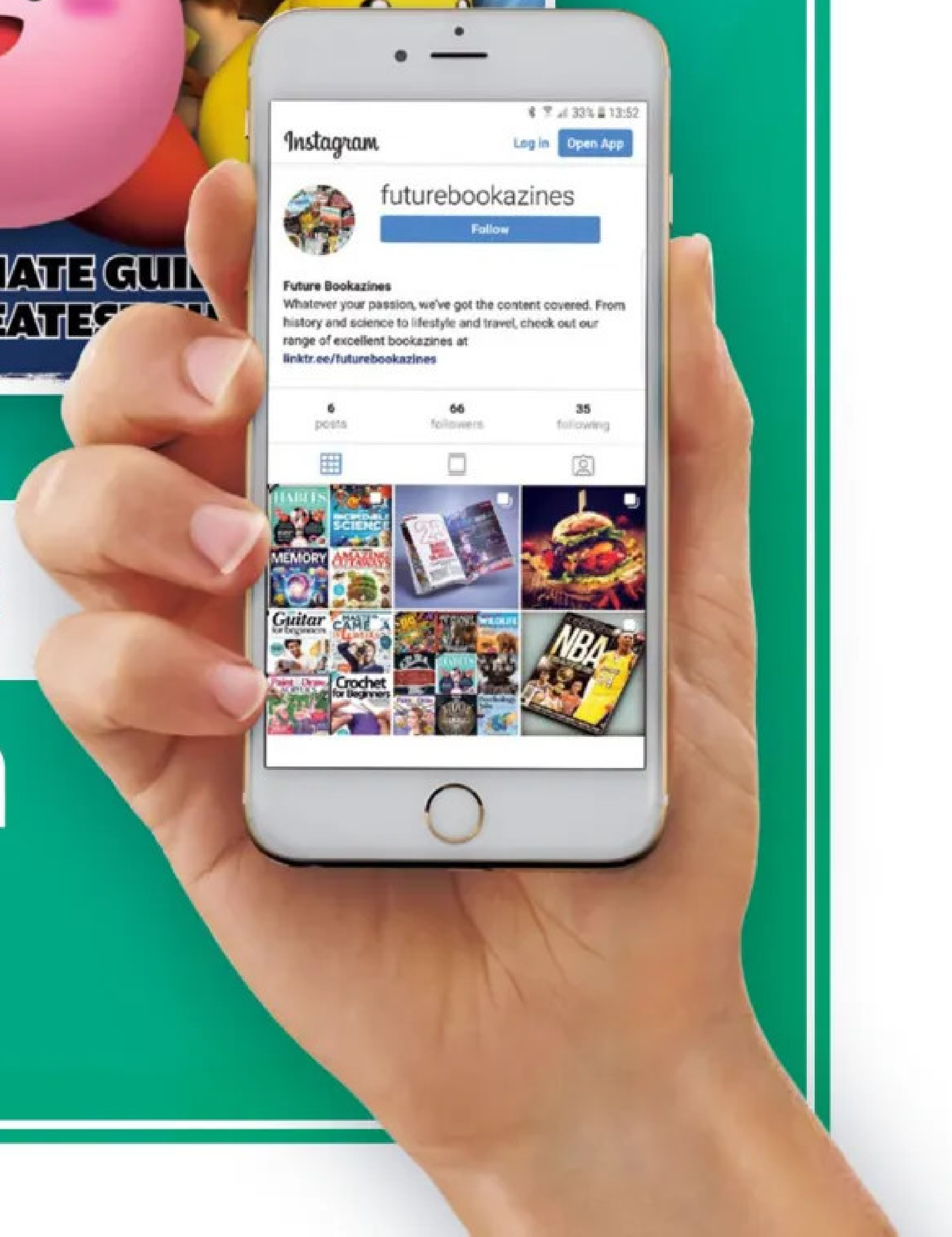
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Live Aid Concert

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Bum bag

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RETRO CONSOLES & VIDEOGAMES

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